To the memory of my grandfather,
Ali Kemal Kılıç

PORTFOLIO IMPLEMENTATION AT TURKISH UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY SCHOOLS, AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PORTFOLIOS AND PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED WITH PORTFOLIO USE

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The committee has decided that the thesis of the student is satisfactory.

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Teaching English as a Second Language.

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Approval of the Graduate School of Education

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ABSRACT

PORTFOLIO IMPLEMENTATION AT TURKISH UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY SCHOOLS, AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PORTFOLIOS AND PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED WITH PORTFOLIO USE

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M.A, Department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Julie Mathews-Aydınlı

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This study seeks to investigate portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools and the reported aims of portfolio use as targeted by these schools. The study further examines teachers' perceptions of portfolio use, specifically, the problems they experience with portfolio use, possible sources of these problems and their suggestions on how portfolio use can be improved.

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, data on portfolio use and aims of its use were collected through a questionnaire administered at seven university preparatory schools. In the second phase, data on teachers' perceptions were gathered through a second questionnaire administered to 126 teachers at five of the seven preparatory schools.

The results reached in the first phase of the study revealed that portfolios are mainly used for the writing component of the preparatory programs. The analyses of the data also revealed that certain key features of portfolios, such as student participation in the selection of portfolio content, self assessment, and student

reflection, are not generally included in portfolios at preparatory programs. Regarding the aims of portfolio use targeted by schools, the results indicate that in order to achieve the intended aims, the missing key elements of portfolios should be included.

The results reached in the second phase of the study indicate that teachers perceive portfolios as an appropriate tool for assessment purposes. When the results regarding teachers' experiences with portfolio use are examined, the outcomes indicate that the problems experienced with portfolio use are in large part felt to be related to students' attitudes towards portfolios, which are themselves caused by students' study habits and previous educational backgrounds. It was also revealed that problems related to portfolio entries and institutional practices create some challenges in portfolio implementation at schools.

Key Words: Portfolio, implementation, assessment, perceptions, Turkish university preparatory schools

ÖZET

TÜRKIYE'DEKİ ÜNİVERSİTE HAZIRLIK OKULLARINDAKİ PORTFOLYO UYGULAMALARI VE ÖĞRETMENLERİN POTFOLYOLARI ALGILAMALARI VE PORTFOLYO UYGULAMALARINDA YAŞANAN PROBLEMLER

Emine Kılıç

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Tez Yöneticisi: Yar. Doç. Dr. Julie Mathews-Aydınlı

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki üniversite hazırlık okullarındaki portfolyo uygulamalarını ve portfolyo kullanımındaki hedeflenen amaçları araştırmaktır. Çalışma ayrıca üniversite hazırlık okullarındaki öğretmenlerin portfolyo kullanımına karşı algılamaları, uygulamayla ilgili olarak karşılaştıkları problemleri, bu problemlerin sebepleri ve portfolyo kullanımını geliştirmeye yönelik önerilerini incelemektir.

Çalışma iki aşamada gerçekleştirilmiştir. İlk aşamada yedi üniversite hazırlık okulunda yapılan anket çalışması ile portfolyo uygulamaları ve hedeflenen amaçlar hakkında veri toplanmıştır. İkinci aşamada bu yedi üniversiteden beşinde 126 öğretmenle yapılan anket çalışması ile öğretmenlerin portfolyo kullanımına karşı olan algılamaları hakkında veri toplanmıştır.

Çalışmanın ilk aşamasında ulaşılan sonuçlar portfoyoların çoğunlukla hazırlık okulu programlarının yazma becerileri sınıflarında kullanıldığını göstermiştir. Sonuçlar ayrıca portfolyo uygulamasının temel özellikleri olarak kabul edilen portfolyo içeriğinin belirlenmesinde öğrenci katılımının, öğrenci öz değerlendirme ve yansıtma çalışmalarının üniversite hazırlık okullarındaki portfolyo uygulamalarında bulunmadığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Portfolyo kullanımıyla hedeflenen amaçlar göz önüne alındığında, sonuçlar hedeflenen amaçlara ulaşmak için portfolyolarda eksik olan temel özelliklerin portfolyolara dahil edilmesi gerektiğini işaret etmektedir.

Çalışmanın ikinci aşamasında ulaşılan sonuçlar öğretmenlerin ölçme ve değerlendirme aracı olarak portfolyoyu olumlu algıladıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Öğretmenlerin portfolyo kullanımındaki tecrübeleri incelendiğinde, sonuçlar yaşanan problemlerin çoğunlukla öğrencilerin portfolyolara karşı sergiledikleri negatif tutumları olduklarını ve bu problemlerin öğrencilerin ders çalışma alışkanlıkları ve geçmiş eğitim deneyimlerinden kaynaklandığını göstermiştir. Sonuçlar ayrıca göstermiştir ki portfolyo ürünleri ve kurumsal uygulamalar da okullarda bazı sorunlar yaratmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Portfolyo/Portföy/Öğrenci ürün dosyası, portfolyo uygulaması, değerlendirmesi, Türkiyede'ki üniversite hazırlık okulları

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CHAPTER I- INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Portfolios may be defined as purposeful collections of students' work that display students' efforts, progress, or achievement in specified areas. The collections are purposeful in the sense that they should include the collecting of students' work based on specific criteria, students' participation in selection of content, and also evidence of students' self-reflection or assessment (Arter, Spandel, & Culham, 1995; Brown, 2004; Gottlieb, 1995; Jones & Shelton, 2006; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

Portfolios have been widely used in primary and secondary education, language arts classes and ESL contexts in the USA (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). The literature on portfolios also presents information about the use of portfolios in EFL contexts. In Turkey, portfolios are not yet widely used, but they have started to gain popularity. In 2006, the Turkish Ministry of Education decided that portfolios would be introduced in primary education as a means of assessment, beginning in the 2006-2007 academic year (The Ministry of Turkish National Education, 2006). At some Turkish university preparatory schools, however, portfolios have already been in use for several years, and others have recently started to integrate portfolios into their programs.

This study attempts to present an overview of different institutional approaches to current portfolio use by exploring the main procedures followed in portfolio implementation and the aims of its use in the Turkish EFL context. The study also aims to examine teachers' perceptions of portfolio use. This study further intends to present problems experienced with portfolio use, possible sources of those problems, and also teachers' suggestions for improving portfolio implementation.

Background of the Study

Educators have always been in search of explanations for how teaching and learning is best ensured. How individuals acquire and construct their knowledge has been the starting point to developing teaching philosophies and designing teaching practices. In recent views of teaching and learning, constructivism has shed light on teaching practices. The teaching and learning approach in constructivism is based on the idea that learning is a result of mental construction (Montgomery & Wiley, 2008). The mental construction emphasized by constructivism requires "…an active stance toward learning, suggesting the learners' direct, intentional, purposeful engagement with others and the world around them" (Jones & Shelton, 2006, p. 6). The definition of constructivism suggests that knowledge cannot be acquired only through traditional rote-learning practices, but requires an active process of construction and transformation by learners.

The notion that teaching does not mean simply transferring knowledge to students has also influenced educational assessment. As a result of the implications for assessment, alternative, sometimes called authentic, ways and tools of assessment have begun to replace or supplement traditional assessment tools. Cole, Ryan, Kick and Mathies (2000) state that a "fundamental authentic assessment principle holds the idea that students should demonstrate, rather than be required to tell or be questioned about, what they know and can do" (p. 5). Similarly, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) describe the term authentic assessment as multiple forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructional activities. They cite performance assessment, student self-assessment, and portfolios as common examples of authentic assessment.

Portfolios were originally created as alternative assessment tools; however, they are also a means of instruction. They are thought to be a means for learners to construct their knowledge because portfolio development " … requires students to generate responses while accomplishing complex and significant tasks, activating relevant prior knowledge, and applying recent learning and relevant skills to solve realistic problems" (Johnson & Rose, 1997, p. 6). In other words, portfolio use requires a complex process in which learners are cognitively involved and use their existing knowledge and skills in order to acquire new knowledge.

There is not a single definition of what a portfolio really is, or what a portfolio should be like because "the definition, form, and content vary, depending on its specific purpose" (Johnson & Rose, 1997, p. 6). Although portfolios, in their simplest form, can be defined as a collection of students' work, there is a consensus that portfolios are not merely folders, but rather purposeful collections that demonstrate students' growth, accomplishments, and process of learning (Arter, et al., 1995; Johnson & Rose, 1997; Moya & O'Malley, 1994; Mullin, 1998; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). In a much broader form, Jones and Shelton (2006) define portfolios as follows:

> Portfolios are rich, contextual, highly personalized documentaries of one's learning journey. They contain purposefully organized documentation that clearly demonstrates specific knowledge, skills, dispositions and accomplishments achieved over time. Portfolios present connections between actions and beliefs, thinking and doing, and evidence and criteria. They are a medium for reflection through which the builder constructs meaning, makes the learning process transparent and learning visible, crystallizing insights, and anticipates direction. (p.18-19)

Portfolio use in language teaching also has the same characteristics described in the broader educational literature. Their use in language teaching is not limited to only one skill. Portfolios have frequently been associated with writing skills; however, they can also be used with oral skills (Hedge, 2008). Johnson and Rose (1997) note that

portfolios can be integrated into all curriculum areas and used for all grade levels. Arter et al. (1995) also state that portfolios can be used to display certain skills and abilities in different areas. In addition, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) note that portfolio contents need to represent what English language learning students are doing in the classroom and reflect their progress toward instructional goals. This indicates that portfolios can be used for various purposes in language teaching; however, no matter for what skills or purposes they are used, the literature agrees on certain common characteristics of portfolios. Samples of student work, student self-assessment, and clearly stated selection criteria are considered to be the key elements of portfolios by O'Malley and Pierce (1996). Brown (2004) also states that a portfolio in language teaching is much more than a folder, but it is a process in which students carefully select, revise and reflect on their work and raise their understanding of their own language development. Therefore, the most commonly defined characteristics of portfolios in language teaching contexts suggest a process in which collection, selection, and reflection or self-evaluation are essential.

Like the definition of portfolios, their implementation in language teaching may also vary from one teacher or institution to another, depending on the purpose. Gottlieb (1995) states that "there is no single way of developing portfolios; rather they tend to represent many different intents, all of which are educationally defensible" (p. 12). For the most part, the literature presents the key elements of portfolio use rather than providing models for how to implement and integrate them into the curriculum because they can appear in different forms according to the teaching objectives of particular teachers and institutions. However, the literature does provide some guidelines for portfolio planning, implementing, and scoring. Gottlieb (1995), for example, suggests an approach to portfolio development which consists of six steps:

collecting, reflecting, assessing, documenting, linking, and evaluation. As a result, it would not be wrong to conclude that portfolios in ESL and EFL contexts can be used in various ways; however, teachers and institutions need to be informed about the key elements of portfolio use and the necessary steps to integrate portfolios into their programs.

The empirical studies conducted on portfolios in EFL contexts show that learners benefit from portfolio use in many ways. Research indicates that students develop autonomy and take responsibility through portfolio use because portfolios provide opportunities for self-monitoring, and they also foster self-reflection (Apple & Shimo, 2004; Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002; Nunes, 2004; Rao, 2006). Nunes (2004) also points out that portfolios facilitate the adoption of learner-centered practice as well as the integration of assessment, instruction and learning. Like Nunes, Rao (2006) states that with the use of portfolios, students are able to present the planning, learning, monitoring and evaluation processes, which means that portfolios support students' learning process by promoting their awareness and self-directed learning.

In spite of the benefits of portfolios, some challenges in portfolio implementation are also stated in the literature. The most commonly stated drawback is the length of time portfolios require both for learners to develop portfolios and for teachers to give feedback on and assess them (Apple & Shimo, 2004; Moya & O'Malley, 1994; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Rao, 2006). In addition, reliability is emphasized as one of the major challenges in portfolio assessment (Brown, 2004; Moya & O'Malley, 1994). There are also some concerns about learners' attitudes towards portfolios because of the fact that portfolios require students to show commitment and determination, and necessitate them to be good organizers (Apple & Shimo, 2004; Rao, 2006). However, Brown (2004) states that these concerns can be

resolved if it is made clear what the objectives are, what tasks are expected from students, and how the products in the portfolio will be evaluated. This suggests that in order to eliminate the potential problems in portfolio development, teachers or institutions need to carefully plan the whole process of portfolio implementation.

Although portfolios have been used in foreign language teaching for about two decades, there is still a need for empirical studies presenting more evidence on the potential benefits of portfolios and presenting models for their implementation. Nunes (2004) notes "there is a wide body of theoretical research that recommends the use of portfolios in EFL classrooms" (p. 327). On the other hand, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) point out that "yet, even with the proliferation of materials, no one addresses in any significant way the use of portfolios with English language learners" (p. 33). Another point to be considered is that while a particular portfolio model may work well with one student group, it might be experienced differently with others. Therefore, empirical studies that will be conducted with students and teachers from different backgrounds and that will present new ways of portfolio implementation are needed.

Statement of the Problem

The literature provides a great deal information about portfolios and portfolio development in education (Arter & Spandel, 1992; Arter, et al., 1995; Benson & Barnett, 2005; Johnson & Rose, 1997; Jones & Shelton, 2006; Kingore, 2008; McMillan, 2001; Wyatt III & Looper, 1999). The principles of portfolio development and the benefits of its implementation in ESL/EFL contexts have received attention (Brown, 2004; Gottlieb, 1995; Moya & O'Malley, 1994; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996), and there are several empirical research studies which focus on actual portfolio assessment and implementation in ESL/EFL classes, and the perceptions of students on portfolio use (Alabdelwahab, 2002; Apple & Shimo, 2004; Barootchi & Keshavarz,

2002; Chen, 2006; Nunes, 2004; Ponte, 2000; Rao, 2006). These studies not only provide valuable information about portfolios in EFL but they also present feedback on actual practices. However, the findings of the empirically based research studies tend to be based on data collected from single classes – usually the researcher's own. In other words, they have examined classroom-based portfolio implementation. There remains therefore limited information about institutional issues related to portfolio development and evaluation (Johnson, Mims-Cox, & Doyle-Nichols, 2006). In addition, though teachers are often rightly the primary sources of feedback on portfolios in EFL, previous research studies have not yet examined how portfolios are perceived by teachers working in institutions where portfolios are implemented on an institution-wide basis. Therefore, research that will present different institutional practices in portfolio implementation and that will provide information about the perceptions of teachers on portfolios, problems experienced with portfolio use and their suggestions for improving portfolio implementation in EFL context, is worth conducting.

In Turkey, portfolios have started to receive attention as a result of changes in the Turkish educational system at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Starting with the 2006 academic year, portfolios became a part of assessment in primary education. The fact that Turkey is making efforts to join the European Union also makes portfolio implementation an important issue for all Turkish educational institutions, because the European Union encourages foreign language teachers and institutions to integrate the European Language Portfolio into their programs. Therefore, it is quite possible that portfolios will gain more importance at all levels of education in Turkey in upcoming years. Overall, portfolios are still not widely used at university preparatory schools in Turkey. Possible reasons for this might be that

teachers and administrators are not informed about portfolio implementation, or that there is a lack of evidence on how to integrate portfolios into their curricula.

There are a few studies that have been conducted on portfolio use at individual Turkish university preparatory schools (Bayram, 2005; Ekmekçi, 2006; Subaşı, 2002; Türkokur, 2005; Şahinkarakaş, 1998), and an earlier study (Oğuz, 2003) on the attitudes of preparatory school EFL teachers toward portfolios - based mostly on the opinions of teachers who had not yet at the time of the study actually used portfolios in their classrooms. The Turkish EFL context still lacks research studies that present a broader picture of different practices in actual portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory classes. Hence, this study aims to explore how portfolios are currently being used in Turkish university preparatory schools. It is also one of the aims of this study to examine how teachers feel about portfolios as an instructional and assessment tool. This study further aims to present problems experienced with portfolio implementation and to consider teachers' suggestions on how to improve its use.

Research Questions

1. How are portfolios implemented at Turkish university preparatory schools?
2. What are the aims of portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of portfolios?
4. What are teachers' experiences with portfolios in practice?
    a. What problems are experienced by teachers in portfolio implementation?
    b. What are the sources of the problems experienced in portfolio implementation?
    c. What suggestions are made by teachers to improve portfolio use?

Significance of the Study

There are some research studies on actual portfolio practices in EFL settings, and these have focused primarily on single classrooms and on the impressions and perceptions of the students who have used them. However, by exploring various institutions and their procedures and policies on portfolio use, this research study aims to present a picture of different ways of portfolio implementation at the institutional level, as well as teachers' perceptions of this still relatively new teaching and assessment tool. It also seeks to help improve portfolio implementation by compiling and discussing the types of problems experienced with portfolio use, and teachers' suggestions for coping with these problems. Therefore, the results of this study may contribute to the literature by providing information about different practices and procedures of portfolio use in EFL contexts and by presenting teachers' insights and recommendations on how portfolios might be more effectively implemented.

At the local level, this study aims at collecting data from Turkish university preparatory classes where portfolios are used as a means of instruction and/or assessment. The study also attempts to identify how teachers feel about portfolios. The findings may not only provide feedback for the preparatory schools where portfolios are being currently used but also serve as a kind of reference point for those institutions that might decide to implement portfolios in the future.

Conclusion

In this chapter the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions and significance of the study have been discussed. The next chapter will present the relevant literature on portfolio implementation. The third chapter presents the methodology and describes the participants, instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures of the study. The fourth chapter describes the results of the data analyses. In the final chapter, the findings,

pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are discussed.

CHAPTER II- LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools and to examine teachers' perceptions of portfolios. This study further aims to present what problems are experienced during portfolio use and teachers' suggestions for improving portfolio use. This chapter reviews the literature in the field, covering the origins of portfolios in education, definitions and defining features of portfolios, the basic guidelines for portfolio implementation, and benefits and challenges in portfolios. In the last section, related research on portfolio use in EFL settings is reviewed.

Constructivism in Education

Constructivist learning theory, which is mainly based on the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, holds the idea that learners learn by actively constructing their own knowledge (Fosnot, 1996; von Glasersfeld, 1996). Therefore, knowledge, according to the constructivist learning theory, cannot be transferred to learners, but is rather perceived as a construct to be pieced together within a process of involvement and interaction (Schcolnik, Kol, & Abarbanel, 2006).

The theory of learning suggested by constructivism has led educators and teachers to question many traditional beliefs and practices in education. Constructivism suggests taking a different approach to teaching and learning practices from those used in most schools. Fosnot (1996) states that the constructivist learning theory has affected the goals that teachers set for the learners, the instructional strategies teachers employ in working toward goals, and the methods of assessment used by school personnel to document genuine learning. Fosnot further notes that a constructivist view of learning suggests that learners be provided with opportunities for concrete and

meaningful experience which can help them search for patterns, raise their own questions and construct their own models, concepts and strategies" (p. ix). Furthermore, in a constructivist classroom, in order for students to integrate chunks of new knowledge into existing knowledge, they need to reflect on what they are learning (Schcolnik, et al., 2006). Thus, such learning can occur in an environment that encourages abstract thinking through reflection, but not in a stimulus-response environment (von Glasersfeld, 1996). It addition, it is noted that concept development and deep understanding should be emphasized as the goal of instruction, rather than behaviors and skills (Brooks, 1990). Such an environment, therefore, would make students aware of not only what they are learning but also how they are learning. It is further stated that the process of knowledge construction in which knowledge becomes a part of the learners leads to authentic authorship and ownership (Schcolnik, et al., 2006).

Practices in a constructivist classroom are based on the idea that active involvement of students in every phase of the teaching process is essential. It is crucial that students are provided with choices and opportunities to select and define which tasks to complete and which tasks to use for assessment and evaluation (Anderson, 1998; Gould, 1996; Schcolnik, et al., 2006). Constructivism suggests that the truth is a result of interpretation, so teachers and students must be aware that learning and the process of assessing learning are interwoven, and require interaction between teachers and students, time, documentation and analyses by both teachers and students (Gould, 1996). It is also important that assessment focus on "students' acquisition of knowledge, as well as the dispositions to use skills and strategies and apply them appropriately" (Burke, 2005, p. xv). The constructivist approach to assessment also requires active involvement of learners in the decision making process of setting the

criteria in evaluation, the rubrics for grading, and engagement in peer and self-evaluation, through which students become aware of what they can do well, what they need to do better, and how they can do better. It also emphasizes that assessment should be continuous over time and use various techniques to provide teachers with different sources of information about the development of students (Anderson, 1998; Reyes, 2008).

The Shift from Traditional Testing to Alternative Assessment

New understandings of learning and teaching based on constructivism and their implications for instructional strategies have created a need for multiple forms of assessment. If these new understandings require students to construct information as they learn and apply it in classroom settings, then assessment should also provide students with opportunities to construct responses to problems (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Brown (2004) notes that "early in the decade of the 1990s, in a culture of rebellion against the notion that all people and all skills could be measured by traditional tests, a novel concept emerged that began to be labeled 'alternative' assessment" (p. 251). Dissatisfaction with traditional tests and the notion of alternative assessment led educators to develop alternative forms of assessment (Palm, 2008). McMillan (2001) states that "more established traditions of focusing assessment on 'objective' testing at the end of instruction are being supplemented with, or in some cases replaced by, assessments during instruction - to help teachers make moment-by-moment decisions - and with what are called 'alternative' assessments" (p. 14). Although Brown (2004) states that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between what different people have called traditional and alternative assessment, and many forms of assessment fall in between the two or combine the two, the distinctive features of these two forms of assessment are clearly stated in the literature, and they

will be discussed below.

Traditional Tests

Standardized tests are viewed by many people as valid and reliable, and thus used as indicators to determine many important educational decisions. Yet, standardized tests are also heavily criticized by some because they do not always assess what students are learning, or their growth and achievement, emphasizing factual information rather than performance and application (Burke, 2005). In addition, Wiggins (1990) points out that traditional assessment tools which depend on indirect and simplistic substitutions can only reveal what students can recall, out of context, about what was learned. Moreover, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) note that traditional tests "do not assess the full range of essential student outcomes, and teachers have difficulty using the information gained for instructional planning" (p. 2). They further state that traditional tests do not contain authentic representations of classroom activities, and thus they are inadequate to assess the full range of higher-order thinking skills which are significant in today's curriculum. Criticisms of traditional tests also indicate that actual classroom practices can be affected negatively because these tests can mislead teachers and students about the kinds of work to be focused on and skills to be practiced in classes.

Basic Concepts in Alternative Assessment

It is possible to find in the literature that different terms or phrases, such as alternative, authentic, direct, or performance-based assessment, are used while discussing alternatives to traditional tests. There is even discussion about the term 'alternative'. Brown and Hudson (1998) for instance, proposed the term "alternatives in assessment" instead of alternative assessment because they questioned why it is alternative if assessment includes such a range of possibilities. They further pointed out that alternative assessment could be misleading because the term implies

something totally new and different that may be "exempt from the requirements of responsible test construction" (p. 657). Leaving aside the question of whether it should be called alternative assessment or alternatives in assessment, it is obvious that this new concept in assessment is completely different from conventional testing.

It is also important to define two terms in this recent concept: authentic and performance-based assessment. In their simplistic forms, authentic assessment is defined as being carried out under naturalistic conditions with minimal contextual constraints, while performance-based assessment means carrying out an observable task that demonstrates a skill or competency (Deneen & Deneen, 2008; McMillan, 2001; Palm, 2008). However, authentic assessment and alternative assessment are sometimes used interchangeably with performance assessment. Burke (2005) also states that these two terms are sometimes used synonymously to refer to variants of performance assessment, which requires students to construct rather than select a response. Therefore, various methods of assessment that differ from traditional tests share at least two features: first, all are viewed as alternatives to traditional tests; second, all refer to direct examination of student performance (Worthen, 1993).

Alternative Assessment

Alternative assessment can be considered to be an umbrella term because it includes authentic assessment, performance-based assessment and other forms of assessment which require constructed-response rather than selected-response test questions or items (McMillan, 2001; Worthen, 1993). Therefore, any method of assessment that is different from paper-and-pencil tests, especially objective tests, is called alternative assessment (McMillan, 2001). Alternative assessment is defined by O'Malley and Pierce (1996) as "any method of finding out what a student knows or can do that is intended to show growth and inform instruction" (p. 1). They further

point out that alternative assessment is authentic because it involves activities that represent classroom and real-life settings, and also that are consistent with classroom goals, curricula and instruction. Hancock (1994) adds that alternative assessment is done using non-conventional methods that are ongoing and alternative assessment involves both teachers and students.

The theoretical assumptions that alternative assessment is based on are different from those in traditional assessment. One major difference noted by Anderson (1998) is that knowledge in alternative assessment is assumed to have multiple forms. Unlike traditional tests, alternative assessment also sees learning as an active process, which means that process is significant as well as product. It is further stated that this kind of assessment facilitates learning by emphasizing a connection between "cognitive, affective and conative" skills, the latter referring to personal style of "how" tasks are processed (Anderson, 1998).

From a practical perspective, alternative forms of assessment have great value in current teaching methodologies. Alternative assessment methods require students to perform their skills and competency in different ways by integrating higher order thinking skills and problem solving skills. In addition, tasks used in alternative assessment are meaningful instructional activities in that they reflect the curricula implemented in classrooms. What also makes them meaningful for students is the opportunity for multiple correct answers formed by multiple sources of information and the interpretation of students. Furthermore, alternative assessment tools provide teachers with continuous feedback on students' strengths and weakness because they are a part of regular classroom activities (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Huerto-Macias, 1995; Johnson & Rose, 1997; McMillan, 2001; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Padilla, Aninao, & Sung, 1996). There are numerous tasks that can be implemented in order to

realize these characteristics of alternative assessment. Observations, exhibitions, oral presentations, experiments, interviews, projects, journals, role plays, group discussions, reading logs, videos of role plays, audiotapes of discussions, self-evaluation questionnaires, conferences, and portfolios can be given as examples of alternative assessment (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Huerto-Macias, 1995; McMillan, 2001).

Portfolios as an Alternative Assessment Tool

Portfolios have become one of the most commonly used alternative assessment tools, especially within a framework of constructivist learning theories and recent language teaching approaches (Brown, 2004; Lynch & Shaw, 2005; McMillan, 2001; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Padilla, et al., 1996). Gottlieb (1995) notes that "with the rise of instructional and assessment practices that are holistic, student-centered, performance-based, process oriented, integrated, and multidimensional" (p. 12), portfolios have emerged to document these new expressions of teaching and learning. The National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC, 2006) defines portfolio assessment as a "systematic, longitudinal collection of student work created in response to particular, previously defined determined objectives, and evaluated in relation to a set of criteria."

Portfolios fit well in the notion of alternative assessment in language teaching as they can be used to document certain kinds of skills that traditional testing instruments fail to measure. Padilla et al. (1996) state that if the curriculum is designed in a proper way which allows students to acquire knowledge and skills progressively, items or products can be placed into the portfolio over time, and this allows anyone looking at the portfolio to see increased knowledge and sophistication of learners. Portfolios are effective tools for assessment in that they assess students' progress and

range of ability over a period of time.

Portfolio assessment is closely related to instruction, which has two benefits: first, portfolios make sure teachers test what they teach; and second, portfolios reveal weak points in instructional practice (NCLRC, 2006). Portfolios also allow students to have a voice in their own learning because they choose samples of their work which they think best document their learning and understanding. Portfolios also require students to be reflective on their learning because they write reflections expressing what they have learned with that sample and why they have chosen a particular product to display in their portfolios.

Lynch and Shaw (2005) point out that portfolios are the most commonly cited example of alternative assessment, but for portfolios to be considered alternative assessment tools, "the process of selecting, and assembling, the nature of the final product, and the reading, feedback, and evaluating procedures" (p. 265) need to demonstrate certain features. These essential features will be presented and discussed in the following section.

Definitions and Defining Features of Portfolios

The concept of portfolios in education was adopted from fine arts, where portfolios are used to demonstrate samples of an artist's work. The portfolio of an artist demonstrates the depth and breadth of the work in addition to its owner's interests and abilities. Portfolios in education are perceived as similar to portfolios in fine arts, in that educational portfolios are used to display the student's capabilities, growth, interests and experiences (Moya & O'Malley, 1994).

There are many definitions of portfolios in education, ranging from simple to more complex. At the simplest level, portfolios are purposeful collections that demonstrate students' growth, accomplishments, and process of learning (Arter, et al.,

1995; Johnson & Rose, 1997; Moya & O'Malley, 1994; Mullin, 1998; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Although this definition of portfolios clearly suggests that portfolios are not merely folders in which students' products are kept, it still needs to be developed because portfolios mean more than being only 'purposeful collections'. Portfolios are defined by Wolf and Siu-Runyan (1996) as "a selective collection of student work and records of progress gathered across diverse contexts over time, framed by reflection and enriched through collaboration, that has as its aim the advancement of student learning" (p.31). A more elaborated definition of portfolios could be:

> A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection. (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991, p. 60)

The definitions given above reveal that portfolios have several characteristics that are considered essential. It is possible to find many key elements of portfolios in the literature because portfolio implementation can vary from classroom to classroom and portfolios are shaped by the reasons for their implementation. Yet, certain features of portfolios, such as being a 'purposeful' collection of student work, or highlighting students' participation in selection of content, student self-assessment or reflection, and scoring criteria, are commonly emphasized in the literature (Arter & Spandel, 1992; Burke, 2005; Cole, et al., 2000; Gottlieb, 1995; Johnson & Rose, 1997; Lynch & Shaw, 2005; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Wolf & Siu-Runyan, 1996).

Wolf and Siu-Runyan (1996) state that portfolios are a collection of student work, but they emphasize that collections must be purposeful. This suggests that there should be criteria that determine what to collect and how to collect student's work. Thus, they do not call portfolios simply 'a collection of student's work' because this

would imply that portfolios could be any kind of folder, container or box in which the student puts all the work s/he has done during a specified period. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) note that "although portfolios may differ considerably from one classroom to another, they can nevertheless be used as systematic collections of student work" (p. 35). This suggests that collections need to be carefully planned and carried out.

Student participation in content selection is also commonly emphasized while defining portfolios. Portfolios are built piece by piece and students put these pieces together numerous times, which means they periodically make selections to create their portfolios. Students who are responsible for selection and evaluation of portfolio entries become more aware of and responsible for the quality of their work, and they eventually become better equipped to monitor their learning (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; Lynch & Shaw, 2005; Murphy, 1997; Valencia & Calfee, 1991).

Self-reflection is also perceived as crucial in portfolio development. Fernsten and Fernsten (2005) point out that one component of portfolios that can be underestimated or missed by teachers is the use of reflective papers. Reflections require students to express and review the process and product of their portfolios, and thus allow them time and space to analyze and evaluate their achievement and products, and determine growth as well as needs. Reflection pieces, therefore, are a critical component of the portfolio (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; Jones & Shelton, 2006; Lynch & Shaw, 2005; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Paulson, et al., 1991).

Another important element of portfolios is the presence of well-specified scoring criteria. Students need to know how their teacher is going to evaluate their work and by what standards their portfolio will be judged. It is important to provide students with clearly specified criteria because this will help students set goals and work for them. Furthermore, it is crucial the criteria be clarified and discussed in the

classroom, and the necessary changes be made by the teacher and students together (Arter & Spandel, 1992; Lynch & Shaw, 2005; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

Different Types of Portfolios

There are many names given to different types of portfolios. However, Montgomery and Wiley (2008) point out that "it is less important to correctly name the portfolio than it is to decide on a specific focus or purpose of the portfolio" (p. 23). Wolf and Siu-Ruyan (1996) note that a portfolio ranges from a collection of student work to a comprehensive documentation of student work, but "all of these versions fall under the label of portfolio" (p. 30). They further state that these collections vary according to what they contain, and how they are organized; however, what shapes them is their purpose. Some names assigned to types of portfolios by different researchers are display, process, personal, academic, and professional. According to Wolf and Siu-Ruyan, three models of portfolios are ownership, feedback and accountability portfolios, while Valencia and Calfee (1991) group portfolios as showcase, documentation and evaluation portfolios.

Specific to the field of teaching language arts, O'Malley and Pierce (1996), state that in their interactions with English language learners, portfolios are by no means standardized to suit every student's needs, but according to their impression, there are three basic types of portfolios: showcase portfolios, collections/working portfolios, and assessment portfolios.

Showcase portfolios are used to display students' best work to parents and school administrators. The entries in showcase portfolios are carefully selected to illustrate students' growth and achievement. Showcase portfolios, however, lack evidence of the process itself because they only include finished products. Therefore, they may fail to illustrate student learning over time.

Collections portfolios/working portfolios contain all of a student's work which aims to show how a student deals with daily assignments. They include rough drafts, works in progress and finished products. This type of portfolio can better provide evidence of both process and product than showcase portfolios. The problem with collections portfolios is that they are not appropriate for assessment purposes because they are not carefully planned and organized for a specific aim.

Assessment portfolios are different from showcase and collections portfolios in that they are focused reflections of specific learning goals and the collections in assessment portfolios are systematic. They also contain self-assessment and teacher assessment. Entries in assessment portfolios are selected with both student and teacher input and evaluated according to criteria specified again both by students and the teacher. The portfolio is not graded itself, but entries may be graded to reflect the overall achievement of the student. Assessment portfolios are likely to inherit all the defining features of portfolios described previously.

Portfolio Contents

It is commonly stated in the literature that each portfolio type or model is shaped by different purposes, and as a result, has a different emphasis in terms of structure, process and content. Johnson and Rose (1997) note that the confusion about portfolios results from the wide variety of their purposes and uses. Similar to this view, Johnson et al. (2006) state that "portfolio contents are organized to assess competencies in a given standard, goal, or objective and focus on how well the learner achieves in that area" (p. 4). It is obvious that without deciding on the purpose for implementing portfolios, the kind of entries or work to be included in the portfolio cannot be determined. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) point out that once teachers identify the purpose of portfolios, they can begin to think about the kinds of portfolio entries

that will best match their instructional outcomes and reflect the type of work students are going to do. McMillan (2001) also highlights the importance of the match between student work samples and instructional activities, and he states that "work samples are usually derived from instructional activities so that products that result from instruction are included" (p. 241). He further recommends that teachers use work samples that demonstrate flexibility, individuality and authenticity.

Portfolios may include various evidence of student performance in different skills that reflect curriculum and instructional practices. Brown (2004, p. 256), for example, provides a list of materials that can be included in a portfolio in language classrooms. The list includes:

- essays and compositions in drafts and final forms;
- reports, project outlines;
- poetry and creative prose;
- artwork, photos, newspaper or magazine clippings;
- audio and/or video recordings of presentations, demonstrations, etc.;
- journals, diaries, and other personal reflections;
- tests, test scores and written homework exercises;
- notes on lectures; and
- self- and peer assessments- comments, evaluations, and checklists.

The list above does not mean that all the materials should be present in a language portfolio nor does it mean that no other student work can be added. As cited from many researchers previously, the purpose and the process of portfolios are the determining factors of portfolio content. Since the definition of portfolios, characteristics of portfolios, their types, and their content can vary, teachers who would like to implement portfolios in their classes might feel confused about portfolio implementation. To make sure that the right decisions are made and portfolios become effective tools for instruction and assessment, certain steps regarding planning, and implementing portfolios should be followed.

Planning for Portfolio Assessment

It is important that the planning of a portfolio be completed before starting to implement it, because the more time teachers spend on planning and designing, the greater success they can achieve in portfolio development. Advance planning also eases the implementation process in class, and thus allows more time for implementing and carrying out the plan, and achieving a systematic assessment (Brown, 2004; McMillan, 2001; Moya & O'Malley, 1994; NCLRC, 2006; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). The steps that will be presented in this section are compiled from different sources that emphasize the requirement of careful planning and suggest common steps despite slight differences. While the number of steps suggested varies, they can be summarized as follows:

Setting the purpose

This is one of the most important steps of planning portfolios because a clear specific idea about the purpose guides teachers through the process. Potential purposes of portfolios may be to encourage student self-evaluation, to monitor student progress or to assess student performance in relation to curriculum objectives. McMillan (2001) states that portfolios are ideal for assessing product, skills and reasoning targets. Therefore, at this stage it is crucial to specify basic guidelines in the light of some questions, such as what aspect of language and what kind of student work will be used in the portfolio, who will use the portfolio, and how the portfolio will be assessed.

Specify portfolio contents

The purpose of this stage of portfolio planning is to determine how information about student progress will be gathered. Once the purpose of portfolio development and assessment is identified, the kinds of portfolio entries that will match the objectives and instructional practices need to be specified. Language tasks and/or entries should systematically reflect student learning, and the results of these tasks will

become artifacts in the portfolio. Basically, the question to be answered at this stage is what students can do to show evidence of their progress toward the objective.

Setting criteria and guidelines

It is crucial to establish the scoring criteria because they help to interpret each student's progress in the portfolio. It is important to realize that "…reading, writing, speaking and comprehending language involve such a complex array of processes, skills, behaviors, and capabilities that it is impossible to characterize effective language development solely through lists of educational objectives" (NCLRC, 2006). Therefore, teachers need standards based on expected behaviors and outcomes that reflect the multifaceted nature of language proficiency. In addition to scoring criteria, student self-reflection guidelines should also be set before starting implementation as it is important that students be informed about how they can reflect on their work and how their portfolios will be evaluated.

Implementing Portfolio Assessment

Once the planning is complete, the actual implementation of the portfolio can start. Like in the planning stage, these are some guidelines or steps compiled from different sources that can help teachers in the portfolio implementation process. It should be noted here that the guidelines suggested in different sources tend to vary because as Arter et al. (1995) highlight, there is no single way to develop portfolios. Klenowski (2002) also points out that "there is no agreement about the most effective method for portfolio implementation" (p. 79). However, several guidelines for implementation exist in the literature and are presented below.

Reviewing the nature of portfolios with students

This stage is considered one of the steps in the planning phase by O'Malley and Pierce (1996), but it is presented as the first step of implementation by McMillan (2001), because introducing the portfolio and its purpose to students suggests that

implementation has started. This step suggests that teacher needs to explain to students carefully what is involved and what they are supposed to do. Explaining learning objectives, showing examples, and providing opportunities for students to ask questions regarding the portfolio process can help a great deal to develop more effective portfolios in particular contexts. It is also significant to share with students their roles in selecting portfolio entries, providing input for assessment criteria and assessing and reflecting on their own. This stage might also allow teachers to receive feedback on the process and make some adjustments according to the feedback given by students.

Organizing/Supplying portfolio content

Some questions to be answered regarding this step are: where portfolios will be kept, who will select the entries, the teacher or the student, and if both, what the proportions will be. The answers might again depend on the purpose, but the age of students and their experience will also have an effect on organizing the content. If portfolios are used for assessment purposes, teachers need to specify what to include and how to present them in the portfolio. McMillan (2001) highlights that "regardless of who makes the selections, however, there need to be clear guidelines for what is included, when it should be submitted, and how it should be labeled" (p. 245). For a better organization, it is suggested that submission and evaluation of every entry be dated, a cover sheet be used and table of contents be included in the portfolio (McMillan, 2001; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

Student self-evaluation and teacher evaluation

Student self-evaluation and reflection practices are one of the most challenging aspects in portfolio implementation because most students and even teachers have little experience with them. It is recommended that students start doing these in simple formats which can be supported with teacher modeling and critiques (McMillan,

2001). Another challenging aspect of portfolio evaluation and assessment is that portfolio assessment is time-consuming. O'Malley and Pierce (1996), however, note that assessment procedures should be seen as part of daily instruction. Some suggestions to ease evaluation and assessment are using learning centers, doing evaluations while students are doing group work, having staggered cycles, and using checklists and rating rubrics during classroom activities. Furthermore, despite generally being cited as a separate step, student-teacher conferences might be considered to be a part of this stage. Conference sessions provide a link between students and the teacher. During such sessions, student reflections and teacher evaluations can be compared, helping to reveal students' strengths and weaknesses. Yet, at the end of conferences, it is important that there is an action plan for students for the future (Brown, 2004; McMillan, 2001).

Monitoring progress and evaluating the portfolio process

According to the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC, 2006), these two stages should not be ignored in portfolio implementation. It is stated that monitoring is an on-going process during the implementation. Monitoring provides data on reliability and validity issues by revealing whether portfolio entries are assessing the targeted skills or areas. Finally, it is highly important that teachers themselves reflect on the entire process at the end of the year or semester. Reflection on what worked well and what needs improving can help teachers make necessary changes for the next time.

It is essential for teachers to effectively design and implement portfolio assessment, and this is best ensured by using guiding steps or a framework that can guide teachers and students throughout the process. It is well-know that "there is no single set of procedures, products, or grading criteria that must be used. You have the

opportunity to customize your portfolio requirements to your need and capabilities…" (McMillan, 2001, p. 237). Yet, unless the portfolio implementation process is planned carefully and implemented with a framework, the portfolio cannot be expected to provide the benefits in language teaching and learning that will be discussed below.

Benefits of Portfolios

Portfolios can benefit both students and the teacher in various ways. One of the most frequently cited benefits of portfolios is that portfolio assessment is an on-going and interactive assessment; therefore, the process actively involves students in the process of teaching and learning. This can be seen as one of the essential elements of recent language teaching approaches: student-centeredness. Students become a part of assessment by reflecting on their work, deciding on the content and evaluating their progress (Delett, Barnhardt, & Kevorkian, 2001; McMillan, 2001; Mullin, 1998; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Salkind, 2006).

By getting involved in the process and self-reflection practices, students can also develop critical thinking, responsibility for learning and ownership of their products in portfolios. Johnson and Rose (1997) note that "when students are required to reflect on what information they need, how they will learn and what they have learned, they begin to view learning as a process within their control" (p. 11). Moreover, motivation is promoted when students see the link between their efforts and accomplishments. That is, when students set their own goals and develop plans to achieve these goals, their cognition and emotions meet, and thus, they are likely to be more motivated in the process of learning (Johnson & Rose, 1997; Jones & Shelton, 2006; McMillan, 2001).

As for teachers, portfolios provide evidence of the process students go though and the products completed at the end of this process. Being continuous and closely

related to instruction, portfolios provide systematic data for formative evaluation rather than being only summative. Portfolios have a potential to document growth over time and contexts, which means that they incorporate multiple measurement tools over time rather than measuring performance on a particular day in a particular setting. According to Mullin (1998), another advantage of this continuity is that portfolios provide fair grading and insight into student performance, which are generally hidden in traditional assessment. The biggest benefit of portfolios for teachers is that they can see the whole picture of student growth with the information gathered from various tasks and settings over time, and thus they receive data on the effectiveness of their instruction as well (Mullin, 1998; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Salkind, 2006; Valencia & Calfee, 1991).

In the literature, the benefits of portfolios for both teachers and students are numerous, but only the most frequently cited advantages are given above. Although these positive aspects of portfolios make them valuable assessment and instruction tools, the challenges in the portfolio process should also be discussed.

Challenging Aspects of Portfolios

The biggest challenge expressed most commonly is that portfolio assessment is demanding in that it requires time, commitment and expertise (Johnson, et al., 2006; Mullin, 1998). Firstly, portfolio assessment is time-consuming because the concept of portfolios is new to many teachers and students and consequently it takes time to understand it fully. Jones and Shelton state that (2006) portfolios require considerable planning, collection and development of evidence, organization and assembly , and these all take time. Second, being a new concept for most teachers and students, portfolios require commitment. Klenowski (2002) notes that “attitudes of students and teachers are difficult to change in institutions and contexts where traditional

conceptions of assessment use, such as for measuring learning, dominate" (p. 79). This suggests that portfolios might not be welcomed when they are first implemented, but schools and teachers need to show commitment to the process. Third, again because portfolios are a recent development in many educational contexts, teachers or administrators might lack expertise, which makes portfolios more demanding and may result in them failing to achieve their aims. McMillan (2001) notes that additional training is necessary for all participants to feel confident and to implement portfolios properly.

In addition to being demanding in several ways, because portfolio assessment is a qualitative approach, it is often questioned in terms of reliability and validity issues. It is frequently noted that while scoring portfolios it is difficult to obtain high inter-rater reliability. That is, when different raters score portfolios, there might be inconsistencies which result from criteria that are too general or from such detailed criteria that raters are overwhelmed, or from the inadequate training of raters (McMillan, 2001; Montgomery & Wiley, 2008; Moya & O'Malley, 1994). Validity is also a major concern about portfolio assessment, which simply questions "the degree to which a portfolio assessment is accomplishing what it claims or intends to accomplish" (Lynch & Shaw, 2005, p. 266). In other words, whether or the extent to which the inferences and conclusions drawn from the assessment are trustworthy is often questioned. However, Moya and O'Malley (1994) point out that multiple judges, careful planning, proper training of raters, and triangulation of objective and subjective sources of information can resolve such conflicts. In addition, having clear criteria established in relation to instructional practices is also believed to be the key to reliability and validity in portfolios (Montgomery & Wiley, 2008; Oskay, Schallies and Morgil, 2008).

The benefits of portfolios seem to outweigh the challenges in implementation or limitations of scoring. However, without training and careful planning, portfolio use might not provide as many benefits as expected. The use of portfolios should not be regarded as extra work but a different way of instruction and assessment. As in any innovative practice, portfolio implementation and assessment require time for adoption.

Research on Portfolios in EFL

There is a large body of research on the design and effectiveness of portfolios (Arter & Spandel, 1992; Arter, et al., 1995; Delett, et al., 2001; Gottlieb, 1995; Moya & O'Malley, 1994; Mullin, 1998; Murphy, 1997; Paulson, et al., 1991; Spalding, 1995; Valencia & Calfee, 1991; Wolf & Siu-Runyan, 1996). Research on portfolio use in EFL settings is relatively recent. Empirical studies (Alabdelwahab, 2002; Apple & Shimo, 2004; Bahous, 2008; Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002; Chen, 2006; Nunes, 2004; Rao, 2006) on portfolio implementation are largely based on classroom-based implementation and examine use of portfolios from different aspects.

Barootchi and Keshavarz (2002), for example, attempted to explore whether portfolio assessment contributes to Iranian EFL learners' achievement and feeling of responsibility for their progress, and also examine the correlation between portfolio assessment scores and those of teacher-made tests. In this study, a Nelson Language Proficiency Test, portfolio assessment, a teacher-made achievement test, and a satisfaction questionnaire were used. Both teacher-made tests and portfolios were used to assess the achievement of the experimental group while the achievement of the control group was assessed through only teacher-made tests. The portfolio contents included both required and optional entries selected by the students to display their best work, and also reflective comments on aspects of learning demonstrated by each

piece of work. At the end of the experiment, a teacher-made test and the satisfaction questionnaire were administered to both groups. The findings indicated that the portfolio assessment, which was perceived positively by the subjects, contributed to Iranian EFL learners' achievement and to their feelings of responsibility. In addition, the study revealed that the portfolio assessment scores significantly correlated with those of teacher-made tests. Therefore, it is concluded that portfolio assessment is a promising testing and teaching tool in EFL classes, and can be used in conjunction with teacher-made tests to provide an on-going measurement of students' growth.

Nunes (2004) reports on a study on portfolios conducted with a group of 10th grade students in a Portuguese high school. The aim of the study was to find out how the record of student reflection in the portfolio could contribute to a more informed approach to the teaching-learning process as well as to promoting a deeper involvement of the students with their language learning. In this exploratory study, the students were told to include in their portfolios whatever they believed to be important for their learning process. In addition to including essays, compositions, revisions, tests, worksheets, summaries, drafts of assignments, and individual and group work, the portfolios could also include pictures, texts, and magazine and newspaper articles that had a special meaning for the students. Above all, reflections on whatever they believed to be important for them as learners and individuals had to be displayed in the portfolios. The students wrote their reflections in the target language. In order to help students, questionnaires in which the students had to answer questions related to their learning process were used. The findings revealed that most reflective thoughts produced by the students focused on the domains of instruction (36%) and learning (43%), whereas only 14% of entries focused on assessment and 7% on the syllabus. This means that the students' reflections revealed different levels of metacognition.

The reflections on the assessment and syllabus were also perceived as valuable feedback to the teacher. This study presented a case for making reflection though the portfolio experience an integral part of EFL learning, and the findings indicated that the portfolio is rightly considered to be an instrument that can foster student reflection, and thus help them become autonomous learners.

Several studies on portfolios have also been conducted in the Turkish EFL context, and some of these studies are related to this study in the sense that they were conducted at Turkish university preparatory schools (Bayram, 2005; Ekmekçi, 2006; Oğuz, 2003; Subaşı, 2002; Türkokur, 2005). Oğuz (2003), for example, examined the attitudes of teachers from 14 different university preparatory schools towards current assessment methods and portfolios as an assessment tool. Her study revealed that the teachers who had used portfolios before - 37 out of 386 - had a positive attitude towards portfolios as an assessment tool. Ekmekçi's (2006) study on the attitudes of teachers and students towards portfolios also revealed similar findings in that both teachers and students felt positively about the portfolio used for writing courses in their institution, Muğla University. Although these studies reveal valuable information about teachers' and students' perceptions of portfolios in general, there has not yet been research examining institutional practices in portfolio implementation at different preparatory schools where portfolios are currently being used.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature on the sources of change in assessment methods, alternative assessment, portfolios, and related research. Although the literature presents extensive theoretical information about portfolio use in the field of language teaching and empirical studies on portfolios, it lacks research on institution-wide portfolio implementation in EFL settings. Furthermore, the studies conducted in

this particular Turkish EFL context have not yet examined problems with portfolio use or teachers' suggestions to improve portfolio implementation. This study will try to fill the gap in the literature by presenting findings that are more focused on portfolio implementation in practice. The following chapter will provide information on participants, the instruments, and procedures for data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER III- METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research is an exploratory study, focusing on portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools. The study seeks to explore the main procedures of portfolio implementation and what aims are targeted by preparatory schools with portfolio implementation. The second goal of this research study is to examine teachers' perceptions of portfolio use. This chapter covers the participants, instruments and data collection and analysis procedures. The study aims to address the following research questions:

1. How are portfolios implemented at Turkish university preparatory schools?
2. What are the aims of portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of portfolios?
4. What are teachers' experiences with portfolios in practice?
    a. What problems are experienced by teachers in portfolio implementation?
    b. What are the sources of the problems experienced in portfolio implementation?
    c. What suggestions are made by teachers to improve portfolio use?

Initial Research on Portfolio Use at Turkish University Preparatory Schools

Having determined the research topic and research questions, the researcher first tried to identify which university preparatory schools were currently using portfolios. The researcher was able to get information for 20 university preparatory schools through personal contacts. As a result of conversations, phone calls and e-mails, the researcher determined that 13 of these 20 schools were using portfolios in their programs. The universities where portfolios were being used in their preparatory

schools were as follows: Anadolu University, Ankara University, Bahçeşehir University, Bilkent University, Boğaziçi University, Dokuz Eylül University, Fatih University, İstanbul Bilgi University, İstanbul Commerce University, Muğla University, Pamukkale University, Yıldız Technical University, and Zonguldak Karaelmas University.

Of the 13 schools, six schools were eliminated for different reasons. Muğla University, for example, was eliminated because only engineering department students at the preparatory school are required to keep portfolios. Another university, Pamukkale University, was also eliminated as it has only opened its preparatory school this year, and was therefore considered to have limited experience with portfolio use. Four other universities, Ankara University, Bilkent University, Boğaziçi University and Dokuz Eylül University, had to be eliminated because of accessibility or because permission could not be obtained in time.

Participants

This study was conducted with two groups of participants in two phases. In the first phase, data on portfolio implementation and the aims of its use were collected from seven individuals. These were school administrators, program coordinators, curriculum office members or testing office members, selected because they were assumed to have the greatest familiarity with the stated aims and procedures of portfolio implementation at their institutions. The table below presents information about the first phase participants according to the university.

Table 1 - The first group of participants

University	Position	Experience in the position in years	Experience in teaching in years
Anadolu U.	Writing course coordinator	6	19
Bahçeşehir U.	Head of testing and curriculum office	3	9
Fatih U.	Assistant preparatory school director	5	15
Istanbul Bilgi U.	Curriculum office member	3	10
Istanbul Ticaret U.	Team/Course coordinator	8	20
Yıldız Technical U.	Writing course coordinator	1	6
Z. Karaelmas U.	Testing office member	2	10

The second group of participants consisted of teachers from five of the seven schools from the first phase of the study, specifically, from those schools that gave permission to have the second questionnaire distributed to their teachers. School directors were asked the number of teachers who were responsible for portfolio implementation in their institutions and questionnaires were posted accordingly. The participants were ensured that personal information and the name of their school would not be mentioned while presenting and discussing the results. For that reason, each school was given a letter from A to E randomly. At two of the schools portfolios were being used only by writing course teachers, while at three other schools, all teachers were responsible for portfolios, and thus the number of the participants from these three schools is much higher. Table 2 includes information about the number of questionnaires sent to and received from each university.

Table 2 - The second group of participants

University	Number of questionnaires sent	Number of questionnaires received
University A	55	36
University B	60	37
University C	50	28
University D	25	10
University E	25	15
Total	215	126

Instruments

In this study, data were collected in two phases. In the first phase, data on portfolio implementation and its aims were collected through a questionnaire (see Appendix A) that was developed by the researcher. Compared to other data collection instruments, questionnaires are generally used for large-scale surveys because they are relatively cheaper, quick and efficient (Brown, 2001). Brown also states that "the data collected resulting from a questionnaire are likely to be standardized, uniform and consistent across subjects" (2001, p.77). For this research, it was essential to gather data from the first group of participants in a systematic way and in a limited time because the second questionnaire would be prepared depending on the results of data analysis of this phase. The four-part questionnaire included various types of closed-response questions: yes/no, multiple response, multiple choice, and open-ended questions.

Part A of the questionnaire was designed to collect brief demographic information about the participants. Part B aimed to gather data on the preparatory

program and the assessment system in general at their schools. Part C consisted of items which asked about the content and procedures of the portfolio used in each institution. Part D focused on the procedures of portfolio assessment at schools, and part E addressed the aims for portfolio implementation at the schools.

For the next phase of data collection, a second questionnaire (see Appendix B) was developed by the researcher to look at teachers' perceptions of portfolios as a teaching and learning tool and as an assessment tool. The second questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part A aimed to gather brief demographic information about the participants. Part B, which aimed to collect data on teachers' overall perceptions of portfolios, included 20 five-point Likert-Scale items ranging from "1" representing strongly disagree to "5" representing strongly agree. Five items in this part were asked twice using different wordings to make sure that the instrument would be reliable. Part C in the second questionnaire included three open-ended questions focusing on problems experienced by teachers, sources of these problems, and suggestions to improve portfolio implementation.

Procedures

In order to make sure that the items in the first questionnaire were clear and understandable, the questionnaire was piloted in the first week of March with four İstanbul Bilgi University Preparatory School instructors and two Bahçeşehir University Preparatory School instructors. The feedback taken from the pilot group and the advisor was taken into consideration in the process of rewording items, adding new ones, modifying unclear wordings, and clarifying ambiguous instructions.

The researcher contacted the participants in the second week of March through e-mail in order to get approval to administer the questionnaire. In the third week of

March, the questionnaire was distributed by hand and e-mail. In the last week of March, the questionnaires were mailed back and the initial analysis was carried out to be able to prepare the second questionnaire.

After the initial analysis of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire was developed in the first week of April. Meanwhile, the researcher contacted the school directors to get approval to distribute the second questionnaire to their teachers. Of the seven schools involved in the first phase of the study, five of them gave permission to distribute the second questionnaire to teachers. In the second week of April, the second questionnaire was revised according to feedback received from the thesis advisor and five former İstanbul Bilgi University Preparatory Program instructors.

In the third week of April, the pilot study of the second questionnaire was carried out with 15 teachers from Pamukkale University School of Foreign Languages and four MA TEFL 2009 classmates who had used portfolios at their schools. For reliability of the 20 Likert-Scale items, a Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated. The measure of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient in the pilot study was .722. In the last week of April, the second questionnaires were posted to the contact persons at the schools and the questionnaires were received back within two weeks.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the first questionnaires were grouped and analyzed parallel to the research questions of the study. The data gathered in Parts B, C and D, which aimed to answer the first research question, were presented in tables including the counts of yes and no for each item. The data collected in Part E, which focused on the aims of portfolio use at the schools, were analyzed by looking at how many times each item was selected.

For the data gathered in the second questionnaire, the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 11.5) was used to analyze the 20 Likert scale items. The five items asked twice were transformed and computed into one item each. As the data were non-parametric, the items were analyzed by examining their median scores and percentages. The items were analyzed under two main categories: portfolios as learning and teaching tool; and portfolios as assessment tools.

Part C of the second questionnaire, which included three open-ended questions, was analyzed following qualitative data analysis techniques. The data were examined through categorization of responses for each open-ended question. More specifically, the data were analyzed according to reoccurring problems and source of problems and suggestions commonly made by teachers.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the initial research procedures, the participants, instruments, procedures and data analysis were described. In chapter four, the data analysis procedures, and findings will be explained in detail.

CHAPTER IV- DATA ANALYSIS

Overview of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore portfolio use at Turkish university preparatory schools and teachers' perceptions of portfolio use. The study also aimed at investigating the problems experienced with portfolio implementation and teachers' suggestions to improve portfolio use at schools. The following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. How are portfolios implemented at Turkish university preparatory schools?
2. What are the aims of portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of portfolios?
4. What are teachers' experiences with portfolios in practice?
   a. What problems are experienced by teachers in portfolio implementation?
   b. What are the sources of the problems experienced in portfolio implementation?
   c. What suggestions are made by teachers to improve portfolio use?

This study gathered data from two questionnaires conducted in two phases. The first questionnaire (Q1) was designed to collect information about portfolio use and aims of portfolio use at university preparatory schools in Turkey. It was administered to seven preparatory schools where portfolios were being used. The second questionnaire (Q2) was prepared according to the analysis of Part E of the first questionnaire, which explored the aims of portfolio use in preparatory programs. The second questionnaire, including 20 five-point Likert-Scale items (Q2.B) on teachers' perceptions of portfolio use and three open-ended questions, was administered to 126 teachers from five Turkish university preparatory schools. The quantitative data were

analyzed using the software Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) 11.5. The questionnaire developed by the researcher proved to be reliable with a coefficient of .88 in Alpha model. The percentages and median scores for each item of the questionnaire were calculated to examine teachers' perceptions of portfolio use. The data gathered through three open-ended questions (Q2.C) were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The responses were analyzed through categorization and examination of reoccurring patterns in the data.

The results of Q1 are presented in three sections in this chapter. The first section covers Q1.B, which investigated the kind of program followed by the schools and the assessment instruments being used at the schools. Therefore, the first section attempts to present a general overview of whether schools have integrated or separate skills courses, and looks at who is in charge of preparing the assessment instruments at the schools. The second section presents the analysis of data gathered in Q1.C and Q1.D. Q1.C explores portfolio content and the procedures followed during portfolio development. This section presents information about how long portfolios have been used at schools, and whether and how students are involved in the process of portfolio development. This section also presents the analysis of the data on what is exactly included in portfolios and what skills they are used for. Q1.D investigated how portfolios are assessed. The third section presents the analysis of data gathered by Q1.E, which explored the aims of portfolio use at schools.

The analyses of the data obtained by the second questionnaire are presented in sections four and five. The fourth section covers the analysis of quantitative data gathered in Q2.B. The analysis includes teachers' perceptions of portfolios as a teaching and learning tool, and as an assessment tool. The fifth section of this chapter includes the analysis of three open-ended items in Q2.C. The qualitative analysis of

Q2.C is presented in sub-sections categorized according to problems experienced with portfolio use, sources of those problems, and suggestions made by teachers to improve use of portfolios. Table 3 below summarizes the data analysis structure.

Table 3 - The structure of data analysis

SECTIONS	INSTRUMENTS	PURPOSES	Research Questions answered
Section 1	Questionnaire 1. Part B	Information about programs and assessment instruments	
Section 2	Questionnaire 1. Part C	Portfolio content and procedures	Res. Ques. 1
	Questionnaire 1. Part D	Assessment of portfolios and grading	
Section 3	Questionnaire 1. Part E	Aims of portfolio use at schools	Res. Ques. 2
Section 4	Questionnaire 2. Part B	Teachers' perceptions of portfolio use	Res. Ques. 3
Section 5	Questionnaire 2. Part C		Res. Ques. 4. a, b, c
	Sub-section 1	Problems experienced with portfolio use	
	Sub-section 2	Source of problems	
	Sub-section 3	Suggestions to improve use of portfolios	

Information about the programs

This section presents the findings of data gathered in Q1 part B. Out of seven preparatory schools, two schools have integrated skills courses, which means students have one course shared by two or three teachers. Four of them have separate skills courses, which means students take different classes given generally by different teachers for different language skills, such as grammar, reading, writing and listening and speaking. One of the schools has a different approach in that the beginner level students follow an integrated skills course while other levels have separate skills courses.

In this section was an item investigating what assessment instruments are used at the preparatory schools and who prepares them. The aim of this item was to get a clear picture of the proportion of use of various types of assessment and a sense of the

teacher's involvement in the overall assessment process. Table 4 below presents the results of this analysis.

Table 4 - Assessment instruments used at preparatory schools

Q1.B.2	Testing office made	Teacher made only	Both testing and teachers	Other (curriculum or materials dev. unit, course coordinators)
Assessment Instruments	Count	Count	Count	Count
Quizzes	4	1	2	-
Midterms/Achievement tests	5	1	-	1
Final exams	5	-	1	1
Oral presentations	1	1	3	1
Projects	-	2	3	1
Portfolios	-	-	3	4

The results of Q1.B2 indicate that traditional assessment instruments, such as quizzes, midterms and final exams, are mostly prepared by testing offices, and that teachers have little authority over these tests. Oral presentations, projects and portfolios, which can be considered as non-traditional assessment methods, are more likely to be designed by both teachers and other administrative units, such as curriculum or materials development units and course coordinators.

The results above raise two issues, the first related to the nature of assessment, and the second to teachers' roles in assessment. First, the reason why teachers are given relatively little freedom to prepare tests and design traditional assessment tools may be to ensure consistent and standard assessment in programs that have a large number of students. Second, compared to traditional assessment tools, teachers seem to be more involved in preparing and designing non-traditional assessment tools. This

suggests that non-traditional assessment instruments enhance teacher involvement in assessment.

Information about portfolio content and procedures followed for implementation

This section covers the analysis of section C in questionnaire 1, which aimed at gathering data on portfolio content and procedures followed during portfolio development at the various schools. Question C1 asked how long portfolios have been used at schools, and the results are provided in Table 5 below.

Table 5 - Experience with portfolios

Portfolio has been used for	Count
2 years	3
3 years	1
5 years	1
6 years	2

As seen in the table, it can be said that most schools still have relatively little experience with portfolio use, thus suggesting that it is likely that these schools are still in the evolving process of finding the best ways to implement portfolios in their particular contexts. Because of this, it could be expected that the open-ended questions in the second questionnaire will likely reveal some problems or complications regarding portfolio implementation.

Items C1, C2, C3, C4 and C9 asked about the kind of information students are provided with about portfolios, how portfolio content is determined, and how feedback is given on portfolios by teachers. Table 6 below presents the results of analysis of this part.

Table 6 - Portfolio content and feedback on portfolios

Q1.C	QUESTIONS	Count YES	Count NO
2	All students are required to keep a portfolio	7	
3	Students are provided with information about		
	a. portfolio content (entries/sections)	7	
	b. assessment criteria for the portfolio	5	2
	c. aims of portfolio use and assessment	5	2
4	The portfolio includes		
	a. entries determined by teachers/admin...	4	
	b. entries determined by students		7
	c. entries determined by a mixture of both	3	
9	Teachers give feedback on portfolios	7	
	When		
	a. at the end of the year/term/course/module	3	
	b. at intervals throughout the year/term/...	3	
	c. other (every week)	1	
	How		
	a. oral feedback	5	
	b. written feedback	5	
	c. using a standard checklist/criteria	2	

The results of item C2 reveal that regardless of students' level of proficiency, all students in six of these preparatory programs are required to keep a portfolio. In the one school that differs, the respondent noted that beginner students are currently not required to keep a portfolio, but they have been planning to develop some tasks for beginner students for portfolio work for next year.

Since portfolios are considered to be an example of an alternative assessment tool, and thus different in various aspects from the paper-pen tests with which students are expected to be quite familiar, it is suggested in the literature that students be informed about portfolio development before the actual implementation starts. The results from C3 show that all schools initially inform their students about the material that is going to be included in portfolios, but not all of them go beyond this. Five out of

the seven schools, for example, report that they inform students about the assessment criteria and the aims of portfolio use, while two schools do not.

Item C4 is an important question as it examines students' involvement in determining portfolio entries. In most schools, portfolio entries are determined by teachers or administrators, which means that students do not make any choices among their products to present in their portfolios. In none of the schools are portfolio entries determined by students alone. This may be because portfolio grades affect students' overall pass and fail scores, and therefore, schools would like to make sure portfolio entries can be scored reliably.

In three schools, entries are determined by a combination of teachers/administrators and students, which suggests students are somehow involved in a kind of selection for their portfolios. As a follow up for this item, the researcher asked the respondents from these three schools for clarification of students' participation in selecting material for their portfolios: were they allowed to choose the topic of a task that had been determined by the teachers or were they actually allowed to choose a task to work on to be included in their portfolios? The responses revealed that entries and task types are still determined by teachers and/or coordinators, but students are given options among alternative topics to produce the same task for their portfolios. Therefore, it may be concluded that although some schools make efforts to involve students in the process of determining portfolio content and entries, students' actual involvement is minimal-in these cases, restricted to topic choice.

In Part C, item nine and its subdivisions explored when and how teachers give feedback on students' portfolios. The table below presents the findings of C9 in more detail.

Table 7 - Feedback on portfolios

	WHEN			HOW		
Universities	at the end….	at intervals..	other (every week)	oral feedback	written feedback	using a standard checklist
A	X	X			X	
B		X		X	X	
C			X	X		X
D			X	X	X	
E	X				X	X
F	X				X	
G	X	X		X		

The table above highlights some important points. It is evident from the results that every school has its own approach in giving feedback, both with respect to the timing of the feedback given and the format it is given in. At two of the schools, students are provided with feedback every week, and this might suggest that portfolios have been integrated into instruction and used as a good, regular source of feedback. At three of the schools, feedback is given at the end of year, term, or module. As can be observed in Table 7, most of the schools do not rely on only one way of giving feedback, but report using both oral and written feedback on portfolios, which implies two things: first, it is important for schools to provide students with feedback on their tasks in portfolios, and second, the schools value multiple kinds of feedback. Despite different approaches in giving feedback, it is not possible from the data in this study to comment on whether one way is more beneficial than the others.

Items C5, C6, C7 and C8 intended to collect information about what is exactly included in the portfolios at these different institutions. Items C5 and C6 asked about what language skills portfolios are used for and C7 and C8 intended to explore what other entries are included in students' portfolios. The findings of these items are

displayed in the table below.

Table 8 - The skills portfolios are used for and entries included in portfolios

C.5	Portfolios are used for					Count
	all components of the program					1
	some components of the program					6
C 6	Skills portfolios are used for					
Universities	Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening	Vocab.	Grammar
A	X	X	-	-	X	-
B	X	-	-	-	-	-
C	X	X	X	X	X	X
D	X	-	-	-	-	-
E	X	-	-	-	-	-
F	X	-	-	-	-	-
G	X	-	-	-	-	-
C.6	What is exactly included in portfolios					
Writing	"various tasks, writing assignments, process writings including drafts, various written products, essays, paragraphs, narrations"*					
Speaking	"various tasks for each level, oral presentations, debates, story retellings, graded reader presentations"					
Reading	"various tasks for each level"					
Listening	"various tasks for each level"					
Vocabulary	"vocabulary note-books/journals, vocabulary tasks"					
Grammar	"worksheets" (not assessed)					
Other	"exams, study worksheets, materials, assignments" (not assessed)					

* words in quotes are excerpts of the exact responses written by respondents.

The results of items C5 and C6 show that only one school reports using portfolios for all components of its program (writing, speaking, reading, listening, and vocabulary). Writing is the only skill for which portfolios are used at all seven schools. The entries included in portfolios are primarily various kinds of students' written products, such as process writings, paragraphs, narrations, and essays. At two schools, entries related to vocabulary and speaking are included. Based on this analysis of content, it may be concluded that among these seven university preparatory schools, in

five of them portfolios can more accurately be called as “writing portfolios” whereas in two schools portfolios can be called “multi-content portfolios.”

The other two items, C7 and C8, aimed to explore two points in portfolio development, self- and/or peer-assessment and reflection, which are considered in much of the literature to be essential elements of portfolio development. Table 9 below presents the findings about the role of self/peer-assessment and self-reflection in portfolios.

Table 9 - Self- and peer assessment and reflection in portfolios

	The portfolio also includes	Count YES	Count NO
C.7	a. students' self assessment criteria or checklist	2	5 *a
	b. peer assessment criteria or checklist	0	7
	c. teachers assessment of specific entries	4	3 *b
	d. teachers assessment of the portfolio as a whole	1	6
	e. other: “can do statements, outside studies chosen by students to be graded quantitatively”	1	6
C.8	Some kind of reflection is included	2	5 *c
	a. on the products included	2	
	b. on the process of keeping a portfolio	1	
	c. their language learning process	1	
	d. other: “materials, content of lessons”	1	

*a: One respondent noted “we used to have but not anymore” (See Appendix C).
*b:One respondent noted “teachers share rubrics and criteria in the class with their students, but students are not required to keep them in their portfolios”.
*c: Two respondents noted that they tried to include student reflections in portfolios but as it did not work, they gave them up.

As seen in the table above, self-assessment and reflection are not commonly included in portfolios at Turkish university preparatory schools. Paulson et al. (1991) state that “a portfolio is a portfolio when the student is a participant in, rather than the object of assessment” (63). However, the results of C7 show that out of seven schools, only two schools require self-assessment, and peer assessment is not involved at all. One of the schools asks students to evaluate their own work, and another one asks

students to evaluate their learning, using "can do statements" (see an example list of statements in Appendix D). The results of C7 also show that specific entries are assessed by teachers, and teacher assessment criteria for specific entries are included in portfolios at four of the schools. However, when teacher assessment is given, it tends to be on specific entries rather than the overall portfolio. Such practices might give students the impression that the portfolio is simply a folder in which their products, which are assessed separately, are kept. In addition, one respondent noted that portfolios in their institution include checklists for portfolio entries, such as writing and speaking tasks (see Appendix E), a vocabulary checklist (see Appendix F), and a class homework checklist (see Appendix G). She further added that these checklists are helpful for both teachers and students to keep track of the materials included in portfolios, including the submission dates and description of each portfolio task. As stated by the respondent, such checklists can not only help teachers follow what exactly has been done by each student but they also can serve as concrete evidence of each student's efforts in portfolios.

C8 investigated whether any kind of reflection is included in portfolios or not. Student reflection is also considered in much of the literature to be a key element of portfolio development because it is believed to enhance students' metacognitive and affective awareness in learning (Gottlieb, 1995). Out of seven Turkish university preparatory schools, however, only two include some kind of reflection in their portfolios. At one of these schools, students reflect on their products included in the portfolio while students at the other also reflect on the process of keeping a portfolio, their learning process and lesson materials and content.

It is worth mentioning that the respondents from two of the schools in which portfolios do not include any kind of reflection noted that they *used to* ask their

students to reflect every week on their products and learning process using guided questions (See Appendix H), but then they gave it up because they came to feel that it did not work well in their institutions. When asked in a follow up about why they felt that reflection did not work well in their schools, the respondents expressed a common reason: the students did not want to do reflection. According to the teachers, the students thought the reflection exercises were useless, and served only as a burden for them.

Part D in the first questionnaire aimed to collect information about portfolio assessment procedures. Table 10 below presents the results of the two items in this part.

Table 10 - Portfolio assessment and grading

The portfolio is assessed	The portfolio grade is based on	Count
at the end of each module	grading entries separately	3
at the end of the year	grading entries separately	2
	both grading entries separately and the portfolio as a whole	1
every week	both grading entries separately and the portfolio as a whole	1

As can be observed in Table 10, at six of the seven schools, portfolios are assessed at the end of the course or year, while at the remaining school portfolio assessment is done every week. When examining what portfolio grades are based on, except for two schools, portfolio grades are based on grading each entry in the portfolio separately. With respect to the timing of assessment, the portfolio is generally considered in the literature to be an on-going assessment instrument, thus providing students with continuous feedback on their performances in a way that will help them

improve their next performances. Thus, considering that students are provided with regular feedback on their portfolios in most of the schools (Table 7), grading portfolios at the end of a course or year might be offering students a chance to revise and improve their products before they are graded.

Aims of portfolio use at schools

This section of the data analysis covers Q1 E, which focuses on the aims of portfolio use at Turkish university preparatory schools. The findings of the analysis of this part are presented in the table below, with the various aims listed from the most frequently selected items to the least selected one.

Table 11 - The aims of portfolio use at schools

Q1E.	With portfolio implementation, we aim to	Count
	e. assess multiple dimensions of language learning (product and process)	7
	h. promote student responsibility and ownership for their learning	7
	b. provide tangible evidence and insights into the learning process and progress of each individual student	5
	d. enhance teacher involvement in assessment	5
	f. promote student-teacher interaction	5
	c. promote student involvement in assessment	4
	a. provide a direct match between instruction and assessment	4
	i. enhance students' critical thinking skills	4
	g. offer opportunities for collaborative work with peers	2

As can be seen from the table above, *assessing multiple dimensions of language learning*, defined as product and process, was one of the two aims that all seven schools report aiming to accomplish with portfolio implementation. Compared to traditional tests, which generally assess students' performance based on products or responses completed in a limited time, portfolios are cited to be appropriate tools for teachers to evaluate and assess students' performances in terms of both the product and

process. Considering that writing tasks in portfolios are revised as multiple drafts, schools may, to some degree, be achieving this aim.

Promoting student responsibility and ownership for their learning was the other common aim targeted with portfolio implementation at all schools. It is worth pointing out here that self-assessment and student involvement in selection of portfolio content are considered to be the two most important factors for encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). However, when looking at the findings presented earlier in this chapter, it can be seen that at only two schools are student self-assessment checklists included in portfolios and at only three schools are students somehow involved in selection of portfolio entries or content. This sheds some doubt on the ability of the portfolios being implemented at more than half of these schools to achieve this aim.

The majority of schools, five out of seven, also expect portfolios to *provide tangible evidence and insights into the learning process and progress of each individual student.* This might be achieved for writing skills because students' written products and all drafts are included in portfolios at all seven schools. Multiple drafts of written products might show the process of each student and the progress they have made in particular writing skills from the first draft to the final draft. However, only at one school do portfolios include tasks on all different language skills, writing, speaking, reading, listening, vocabulary and grammar. This indicates that portfolios in most schools involved in this study cannot give a complete picture of students' process and progress. In fact, this problem will also be examined later in this chapter where teachers' perceptions are examined.

Enhancing teacher involvement in assessment was also reported as one of the aims that five of the seven preparatory schools want to achieve through portfolio

implementation. As presented in table 4 earlier in this chapter, compared to traditional paper-pen tests, teacher involvement in designing non-standard assessment methods seems to be higher. In that sense, it can be expected that portfolio implementation has enhanced teacher involvement in assessment. *Promoting student-teacher interaction* was another aim that five out of the seven schools expect to achieve through portfolio use. Based on the previous data presented earlier in this chapter on portfolio content - mostly multiple drafts of written products - it can be concluded that this aim seems likely to be realized because the process of revising drafts and getting feedback from the teacher on their drafts is a way of serving to increase the dialogue between the teacher and students.

Although peer assessment and peer feedback are considered to be important in portfolios (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996), *offering opportunities for collaborative work with peers* was chosen as an aim by only two schools. It is obvious that at most Turkish university preparatory schools, portfolios are not aimed at providing opportunities for students to work with their peers or at providing each other with peer feedback. This can also be seen from the findings presented in Table 9, which show that peer assessment criteria or checklists are not included in portfolios in any of the schools.

Teachers' perceptions of portfolio use

The last two sections in this chapter present the analysis of the data collected through the second questionnaire, administered in five of the seven schools, which were involved in the first phase of this study. Section four presents the analysis of 20 five-point Likert-Scale items, which aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of portfolios, and section five includes results of three open-ended questions, which focused on problems experienced with portfolio use, sources of these problems and

suggestions to improve portfolio use.

Section four examines teachers' perceptions of portfolios, from two main perspectives: the role of portfolios as a teaching and learning tool; and their role as an assessment tool. Data for this section were gathered by a questionnaire containing 20 five-point Likert-Scale items. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests showed the data not to be normally distributed ($p < .05$); therefore, the percentages and median scores for each item were calculated to find out teachers' perceptions of portfolios. Those items asked twice using different wording were transformed and computed into one item each. Table 12 includes the items examining teachers' perceptions of portfolios as an instructional tool, with the items presented from the most agreed upon to the least agreed upon ones.

Table 12 - Portfolios as a teaching and learning tool

	ITEMS	SD	D	N	A	SA	Md
	The portfolio	%	%	%	%	%	
1/20	promotes student-teacher interaction	-	5.55	18.25	53.57	22.61	4
2/10	provides a direct match between instruction and assessment	1.98	11.11	22.22	48.41	16.26	4
9	provides insights into each student's learning process	1.6	6.3	28.6	50.8	12.7	4
16	gives a clear picture of each student's improvement	4	10.3	32.5	42.9	10.3	4
13/17	promotes student responsibility and ownership of their learning	3.57	13.49	30.95	44.44	7.53	3.5
3/7	promotes student self-assessment	2.38	13.09	33.33	38.88	12.30	3.5
8/19	enhances students' critical thinking skills	4.36	14.28	35.71	37.69	7.93	3.5
11	offers students opportunities for collaborative work with peers	3.2	20.6	31.7	35.7	8.7	3

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree; Md=Median; %= Percentage

As can be observed in Table 12, a majority of teachers agrees with the first three items while the level of agreement is around 50% for the next three items. As for the last two items, there is only around 40% of agreement among teachers.

Although the median scores of the first four items are the same (4), the level of agreement for these items in terms of percentages differ considerably. The first item (1/20) stands out, as the majority of the participants agreed (A+SA= 76.18%) that portfolios promote interaction between them and their students. It is also important to note that none of the participants strongly disagreed with that item. This might be because portfolios generally include revised writing tasks as multiple drafts, which requires teachers and students to communicate and compromise with each other in the process.

For the next item (2/10), which asked whether portfolios provide a link between teaching and assessment, there is a considerable drop in the level of teachers' agreement. Although item 2/10 is the second most favoured one on the list, there is only 64.67% agreement for this item. Similarly, the level of agreement with the third favoured item (9), about providing evidence of each student's learning process, is 63.5%, which does not indicate a strong agreement among teachers. Although there is a majority of teachers who agreed with items 2/10 and 9, there is still a considerable number of teachers who felt neutral about these items. The reason could be that at the five schools where this questionnaire was administered, three schools were using portfolios in only their writing courses while the other two were using them for other skills in addition to writing. The participants might have thought that portfolios match only one particular aspect of their program and instruction, thus failing to fully reflect and provide insights into each student's learning process. The other factor affecting the level of agreement with item 9 could be lack of variety in task types and not having

individualized tasks in portfolios, both of which were frequently mentioned by teachers in the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. The literature notes that it is crucial to personalize portfolios as much as possible – not only to suit classroom goals, but also to suit each student's individual goals (McMillan, 2001; O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). That is, if portfolio contents can be individualized, they can provide in-depth knowledge about each student as a learner. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, portfolio tasks at the schools are the same for all students, which might not allow portfolios to display insights into each student's unique learning processes.

For item 16, which asks teachers' perceptions of whether portfolios give a clear picture of each student's improvement, the level of agreement is much lower at 53.2%. It is also important to point out that a considerable number of teachers (32.5%) were neutral about this item. This result might be related to a perception among teachers that the tasks required for portfolios at many Turkish university preparatory schools fail to reflect students' real performance and thus improvement because of the reasons discussed in the previous paragraph. Lack of variety and not having creative and individualized tasks might be one of the reasons why portfolios are seen by several as only partially displaying each student's improvement. In addition, some teachers' responses quoted later in this chapter (p. 76) could indicate another reason why half of the teachers do not agree with item 16.

Such perceptions of problems with task types might be also revealed by the results of the least favoured item. Item 11 asks about the role of portfolios in student collaboration. It was presented earlier that none of the schools includes peer-assessment in portfolios. However, 44.4% of teachers still agree that portfolios offer students opportunities for collaborative work with peers. In those teachers' classes, students might be asked to work collaboratively while producing portfolio tasks, but

for most of the teachers portfolios do not offer students opportunities to work with peers. It is worth noting here that Respondent 95 from University C strongly disagreed with item 11, and noted next to the item "in terms of plagiarism, yes; like borrowing and copying works from each other". This respondent's sarcastic interpretation of cooperative work opportunities indicates that plagiarism is a big challenge to portfolio implementation, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The level of agreement for items 13/17, which asked about students' taking responsibility for their learning, and 3/7, which asked about self-assessment, is almost the same: 51.97 and 51.18 respectively. The number of people who feel neutral about these two items are also quite similar, around 30% each. Items 8/19 asked whether portfolios enhance students' critical thinking skills, and the level of agreement with this item is only 45.62%. These three items can be seen as related to each other according to the literature. The literature highlights the importance of student self-assessment and reflection in portfolios as a way of promoting student responsibility to take charge of their learning (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). Thus, the results for these three items are not surprising because the analysis of the first questionnaires revealed that out of seven preparatory schools, at only two of them are student self-assessment and reflection included in portfolios (see Table 9). Of the five schools in which the second questionnaire was administered, portfolios included student self-assessment at only one institution. Lacking self-assessment and reflection procedures, portfolio implementation could not be expected to effectively promote students' taking responsibility for their learning or engaging in critical thinking.

The next section of analysis examined teachers' perceptions of the portfolio as an assessment tool. The items here were grouped and analyzed in terms of teachers' general attitudes towards portfolios as an assessment tool and appropriateness of

portfolios in assessing different aspects of language learning and different skills. Table 13 below presents the results of items which asked about teachers' impressions of the portfolio as an assessment tool.

Table 13 - Portfolios as an assessment instrument

	ITEMS	SD	D	N	A	SA	Md
	The portfolio	%	%	%	%	%	
4	is a good assessment method	0.8	7.9	23	48.4	19.8	4
12	is an impractical tool to use for assessment purposes	11.9	37.3	28.6	15.9	6.3	3

As can be observed in Table 13, the participants have generally positive attitudes towards the portfolio as an assessment tool. When asked directly about portfolios as an assessment method, the majority of teachers (68.2%) believes that the portfolio is a good assessment instrument, while only a few teachers (8.7%) openly disagree with this idea. Portfolio checking and grading were reported to be taking a lot of time by teachers in the open-ended part of the questionnaire (discussed later in this chapter in detail). Nevertheless, only 22.26% of the participants agreed with item 12, which asked whether the portfolio is an impractical assessment tool, while a considerable number of the teachers (49.2%) do not think that the portfolio is impractical. These results imply that although teachers mentioned the workload created by the portfolio as one of the problems, most of them still believe the portfolio is a good assessment tool rather than an impractical one. The next table includes the results of items asking whether the portfolio is appropriate to assess students' learning processes and products.

Table 14 - The role of portfolios in assessing students' performance

	ITEMS	SD	D	N	A	SA	Md
	The portfolio is an appropriate tool	%	%	%	%	%	
14	to assess students' learning processes	4	6.3	30.2	44.4	15.1	4
18	to assess students' products	3.2	6.3	20.6	56.3	13.5	4

The results indicate that very few teachers think that the portfolio is not an appropriate tool to assess students' learning processes and products, 10.3% and 9.5% respectively. Rather, most teachers (14: 59.5%; 18: 69.8%) believe the portfolio is an appropriate tool to assess students' products. Of the two however, teachers are slightly more confident in portfolios being appropriate for assessing students' products rather than learning processes. These results seem to be supporting the results for item 9, which asked whether the portfolio gives a clear picture of each student's learning process. The level of agreement for items 9 and 14 indicates that portfolios cannot fully document students' learning processes. Teachers' responses on open-ended questions also reveal that portfolios at schools involved in this study are considered as more appropriate to assess products than learning processes. The next table presents information about the skills that teachers feel can be assessed through portfolios.

Table 15 - The role of portfolios in assessment of language skills

	ITEMS	SD	D	N	A	SA	Md
	The portfolio	%	%	%	%	%	
6	is an appropriate tool to assess only writing skills	11.1	33.3	22.2	25.4	7.9	3
15	can be used to assess different language skills	3.2	11.9	20.6	42.9	21.4	4

At three of the schools, the portfolio is used solely for the writing component of the program while at the other two schools portfolios are used for other skills as well.

However, when the results are examined, only 33.1% of teachers believe that the portfolio is appropriate for assessing only writing skills while 69.3% of them believe different language skills can be assessed with portfolios. It can be said that although in reality portfolios are mostly used for writing skills at most Turkish university preparatory schools, a considerable number of teachers believe other skills can also be included in portfolios. The next table presents the results for item 5, which focuses on the role of portfolios in teacher involvement in assessment.

Table 16 - The role of portfolios in increasing teacher involvement in assessment

	ITEM	SD	D	N	A	SA	Md
	The portfolio	%	%	%	%	%	
5	enhances teacher involvement in assessment	0.8	9.5	15.9	50	23.8	4

It is important to note that all five schools involved in this part of the study have testing offices and that, for the most part, testing office members prepare the exams in the program. This generally suggests that teachers have little or no involvement in assessment in these institutions at least with respect to traditional paper-pen exams. However, the results for item 5 indicate that most teachers (73.8%) believe that the portfolio enhances teacher involvement in assessment. This is a somewhat expected result since teachers are more likely to be involved in the process of setting and scoring the tasks included in portfolios. However, it should also be noted that teachers might have challenges in portfolio assessment because of inappropriate or poorly-designed rubrics, and this problem will also be discussed in the next section of the analysis.

Analysis of open-ended questions

Section five in this chapter presents analysis of the qualitative data gathered through three open-ended questions in Part C of the second questionnaire. The respondents of questionnaire two were asked to write their responses in the space provided for each question. The responses to these open-ended questions range from, mostly, single sentences, to full paragraphs. The responses for each open-ended question were analyzed by coding the data and presenting them under sub-categories. Since the data were collected from five different Turkish university preparatory schools, the analysis was done considering the common points in the data. The table below presents the information about the open-ended questions and the number of responses given for each.

Table 17 - Open-ended questions

The questions	N	Number of	
		Missing responses	Responses received
1. Have you experienced any problems with portfolio use in your classes, and if so, what have they been?	126	22	104
2. What do you think have been the sources of any problems you have experienced?	126	31	95
3. What would be your suggestions to improve portfolio use?	126	38	88

While analyzing the responses, it was noticed that the responses to the first and the second questions were mostly overlapping; therefore, the analysis of the data gathered from these two questions is presented together. The suggestions made in the third question by respondents, about improving portfolio use, are presented separately.

Problems experienced with portfolio use and their sources

The analysis of the responses to the questions above revealed three main categories regarding the problems experienced with portfolio use at schools and some sub-categories under each. The categories that emerged were “problems related to

students", "problems related to portfolio implementation," and "problems related to institutional policies."

Problems related to students

Students' approach to portfolios

A great majority of the respondents from the five institutions wrote that their students do not see the real purpose of keeping a portfolio. Many respondents wrote about students' unwillingness, lack of enthusiasm and low motivation for portfolios and for keeping them regularly. There were other responses saying that most students see portfolios as a burden and prepare them only at the last minute. Some example extracts from the respondents (R) are as follows:

> Students don't seem to understand the importance of portfolio keeping in increasing the quality of their learning and assessment. That's why they are reluctant to keep it. They perceive portfolios as another task, not as a tool to guide them (R 30 from Uni. A).
>
> Most students do not see the rationale behind keeping a portfolio. Although they have been told several times what portfolio is, they keep portfolio for the sake of doing it and getting high grades from it (R 38 from Uni. B).
>
> Students never get the purpose of portfolios no matter how well you explain what a portfolio is and isn't. Portfolios are always approached as bothersome (R 63 from Uni. B)
>
> The biggest problem is that students are reluctant to keep a portfolio because they lack responsibility and enthusiasm to learn, but just (want) to pass their classes (R 104 from Uni. C).
>
> Some students do not pay much attention to their work in their portfolios and this causes low-quality products that don't reflect their real performance (R126 from Uni. D.).
>
> Some students are not aware of the importance or benefits of portfolios so they prepare it at the last minute or copy from others (R 81 from Uni. E).

As can be seen from the teachers' responses, most teachers seem to complain about students' attitudes towards portfolios and cite these as a reason for the students' failure to see the benefits of keeping portfolios regularly.

Students' study habits and previous learning experiences

Another problem raised by a considerable number of respondents is that students are not used to keeping track of their own learning. A great number of respondents stated that students lack good study habits and are not used to seeing their learning as a process:

> As Turkish students aren't used to such kind of assessment, they tend to focus on their product rather than the process in constructing the tasks. Therefore, it is very hard to raise awareness in order to be able to make them get used to portfolios (R 4 from Uni. A).
>
> For those students who are not used to such assessment systems like portfolios, portfolios are a kind of pile of papers which is prepared just before the teacher checks. Although portfolio can work well with students who can take responsibility for their own learning, the number of such students is very few. We cannot make our students gain the habit of keeping track of their learning through portfolios in one year (R40 from Uni. B).
>
> The problem arises from students' study habits and work ethics. That's to say, students do not have good study habits, which have to be taught at primary or secondary schools. Because of this, they find the workload too heavy and cannot complete their assignments on time and by themselves. To accomplish they tend to cheat or get too much help from peers or other sources. That's why portfolio does not help students' progress much (R 108 from Uni. C).
>
> Students have had a habit of traditional teaching-learning style in which students are accepted as passive learners and teachers are considered as active ones. In that case, portfolio work is generally seen as a great deal of workload by students (R 118 from Uni. D).

Here again we see teachers attributing problems with portfolio use to student related factors, this time focusing on the students' previous educational culture and the Turkish educational system that helped create these students' educational expectations. A substantial number of respondents, particularly from three universities, relate the two problems directly to the Turkish Education system, which is mostly exam-focused. It is frequently stated that students come from exam-oriented backgrounds and their main concern is to get high grades and pass their classes. That's why they perceive portfolios as an end-product to be assessed rather than a process in which they can evaluate their learning. In the words of some of these teachers:

> The portfolio and the system at Turkish high schools are not compatible with each other. Students lack the notion and don't seem to attain it in a year, especially when they are struggling with a new language (R 24 from Uni. A).
>
> We cannot expect portfolios to work well with a group of students who have never used portfolios in their previous education, taken responsibility for their learning or thought critically about their work or learning. The problem is students' attitudes but the source is their previous education culture (R 42 from Uni. B).
>
> The problems are largely a consequence of long schooling which is completely exam-focused (R 107 from Uni. C).

As can be seen in the quotes above, many teachers believe that students' negative attitudes and lack of enthusiasm for portfolios largely stem from students' previous education culture.

Copying tasks from other sources

Most of the teachers from these five universities stated that one of the biggest problems is that students tend to copy portfolio tasks from their friends, upper class students or the internet, rather than producing their own work. The analysis of the teachers' responses revealed that this is again related to a problem explained previously. Since most students see portfolios as a task to complete in order to be assessed, their main concern is to hand in finished portfolios rather than putting in their own work that reflects their performance:

> Some students tend to copy sentences or paragraphs from the internet or others for their writing and speaking tasks rather than producing their own work. In such a situation, it is difficult to follow students' progress since what they write doesn't reflect their real level or performance (R 27 from Uni. A).
>
> Students tend to prepare them at the last minute by copying from others (R 42 from Uni. B).
>
> In our university, students are supposed to read a graded reader and fill in a graphic organizer about that reader and report it to the teacher in portfolio sessions. However, most of them do not read those books, but they listen from friends or read others' summaries. So, they know the book quite well but they cannot be accepted as they have done the task (R105 from Uni. C).
>
> Students are likely to submit work done by others. They sometimes do not write in class and complete their work at home. But teachers

> may not be sure whether the student has written it by himself or not (R 121 from Uni. D).
>
> Students who are in different classes and who have different teachers sometimes (submit) the same product and it is difficult or generally impossible to realize this (R 87 from Uni. E).

Among the five preparatory schools, in which the data were collected, there are different methods of portfolio implementation in terms of the skills portfolios are used for and the way portfolio tasks are produced. While at two institutions students do their portfolio tasks outside of class, at the others the first draft of tasks, mainly writing tasks, are carried out as in-class activities, but the following drafts are usually completed outside of class. The responses above indicate that regardless of which institution the participants are from, copying from other students or sources is a real challenge in portfolio implementation. The findings indicate that portfolios might not reflect some students' real level or performance since the tasks included in portfolios can be copied from other sources. Although the responses do not suggest a direct reason for this problem, it might also be related to task types, the number of tasks to be completed, or the time allocated to complete tasks in class. These issues will be presented as part of the next category.

Problems related to implementation/use

Unlike the reported problems related to students, which tended to be common across all respondents, the problems related to the actual implementation process or use of the portfolios tended to be less commonly shared. This is, in fact, something which is to be expected since the various institutions have different ways of using portfolios. Nevertheless, certain sub-categories still emerged.

Inappropriate portfolios tasks and entries

A considerable number of respondents (R) stated some problems about the tasks or products included in portfolios. Especially those participants from the two preparatory schools in which portfolios are used for other skills in addition to writing,

state that the tasks for portfolios might not be appropriate for students. The most commonly shared point they make is that students find portfolio tasks either too boring and easy, or too challenging. It is also mentioned by some teachers that there are sometimes too many tasks in one week and this makes students get bored and tired of portfolios. The following example responses express these kinds of problems with portfolio tasks:

> There are too many tasks in a week. I think they should be in a good level and category and also match that week's topic (R 33 from Uni. A).
>
> Students are sometimes asked to include many but mostly unnecessary things in their portfolios, so they end up putting things in their portfolios without thinking about them (R 42 from Uni. B).
>
> Lack of variety in tasks is a problem because students have similar tasks at all levels (R 95 from Uni. C).
>
> Students do not find portfolios enjoyable because of the same kind of tasks (R 63 from Uni. B).
>
> Portfolios tasks must be more productive and production must be enhanced at all levels and stages of language teaching. If this is done, this can help students produce more qualified products in their portfolios (R117 from Uni. D).
>
> Portfolio tasks are not really interesting and demanding (R 82 from Uni. E).

The teachers' responses serve as a reminder of how important it is that the tasks and portfolio entries be well-planned or thought out according to the level and interests of the students. Inappropriate tasks, lack of variety in task types and too many tasks seem to be contributing factors to students' not paying much attention to or not making much effort in their portfolios. Having too many tasks is also frequently stated as another reason for the problem expressed under the next sub-category.

Workload for teachers and time constraints

A considerable number of respondents from different schools in this study also emphasized the workload and paperwork that portfolio checks and grading create. Most of the teachers who raised this issue wrote that teachers have already too many

things to deal with like planning their lessons, preparing supplementary materials and exams, and actual teaching hours. They stated that grading portfolio tasks and keeping track of each students' products are time-consuming and bring extra workload for them. This might also be the result of large class sizes at schools, as a couple of the following responses suggest:

> If there were maximum 15 students in one class, teachers could give more effective feedback on portfolios to students individually and get better results (R 66 from Uni. B).
>
> There are already other things for us to occupy with. We as teachers don't have enough time to reflect on portfolios and progress with students. Once one task is completed, the next task is focused on (R 8 from Uni. A).
>
> There is usually so much work to do in the program that sometimes teachers might have to rush through portfolio application and grading (R61 from Uni. B).
>
> Teachers might not give enough feedback and support to each student because there are too many students in one class and different task in each week (R 102 from Uni. C).
>
> The biggest problem is time-limit. Writing instructors must be provided with some free hours to interact with students and give feedback. In addition, portfolio packs are thick and heavy but we cannot check them at school because we don't have enough time for this at school (R 117 from Uni. D).
>
> It creates too much work for the teacher (R 82 from Uni. E).

As the responses given above suggest, giving feedback and grading portfolios create extra work for teachers, especially at schools where the class size is large and teachers have many other responsibilities to fulfil in the program. This heavy workload seems to prevent teachers from giving effective and individual feedback on students' work or portfolios. These problems might stem from administrators underestimating the requirements of portfolio implementation or perhaps having unrealistic expectations about the ease with which portfolio can be incorporated into a curriculum. In fact, many respondents from these schools state institutional policies as one of the important problems with portfolio implementation.

Problems related to institutional policies

Several teachers made comments indicating that it is important to plan portfolio implementation, design portfolio tasks, and arrange the assessment procedures carefully before putting portfolios into practice. Students should be clear about the requirements and assessment procedures in portfolio implementation. This is probably more important in a context of institution-wide portfolio implementation because the way portfolios are kept, the tasks included and the way they are assessed are expected be standard and consistent among all levels and with all teachers. The problems caused mainly because of institutional approaches to portfolios can be grouped as follows.

Consistency in portfolio implementation

The issue of consistency among teachers in the program was only expressed by the respondents from one particular institution; however, it was raised so frequently that their critical responses about consistency in portfolio use cannot be ignored:

> Students don't/can't keep portfolios regularly. It doesn't continue throughout the year. It changes every semester and they start to keep a new one each semester. There's not a clear or standard format. It is not a source of learning tool, but a file where they just keep documents (R 37 from Uni. B.).
>
> I think there is got to be a standard application amongst teachers concerning the procedures and content, but somehow we lack it here (R 48 from Uni. B).
>
> The portfolio components and assessment changed each term. It's hard for both teachers and students to know what's going on. There's always some kind of confusion about what actually goes in the portfolio and what is actually graded among teachers and students (R 71 from Uni. B).
>
> There is no consistency in portfolio content and also among staff in stressing its importance (R 58 from Uni. B).
>
> Weekly portfolio checks were upon teacher discretion. Therefore, there were many students who completed terms without having a checked portfolio (R 64 from Uni. B).

From their responses we can assume that teachers at this institution are quite knowledgeable about what a portfolio is and how portfolios should be implemented.

However, as their answers suggest, inconsistency and frequent changes in portfolio implementation during instruction may result in many problems.

Well-designed assessment procedures

The importance of rubrics and criteria for reliability in grading portfolios is emphasized in the literature (Moya & O'Malley, 1994) Similarly, in addition to the fact that grading portfolios takes a lot of time for teachers, problems caused by inappropriate rubrics or lack of well-designed rubrics were raised by the respondents from three universities involved in this study. Some teachers stated that scoring portfolios is sometimes very subjective since the teachers are not provided with clear guidelines or rubrics for assessment. The responses below indicate how teachers expressed this problem:

> We have the same or very similar rubrics for different tasks and scores sometimes depend on teachers' interpretations (R 98 from Uni. C).
>
> The problems may result from not having a concrete assessment chart or guideline to present the requirements to students. If you are not being so clear and consistent about how to guide students, you fail giving effective feedback and assessing portfolios fairly (R 44 from Uni. B).

In addition to concerns about rubrics and guidelines for portfolio assessment, teachers from most of the five schools expressed some problems with the overall weight of portfolios in their assessment system and with the overall use of portfolios as assessment tools. For example:

> Portfolio is an excellent learning tool and should be used to give feedback on students' ongoing performance. However, when it is used as an assessment tool, as it is in our school, it doesn't give accurate results and does not reflect the actual performance of the students. It is too hard to grade the portfolio accurately (R 46 from Uni. B).
>
> In our institution, writing tasks in the portfolio have a huge impact on their end of module pass and fail grades. If the weight of writing tasks were lower in overall assessment, the idea of portfolio could be more effectively used (R 21 from Uni. A)

> Some students tend to write their second drafts at home or have them written before drafts are written in the class because the grade given for their drafts affect their overall grade to pass a module. These students take high grades for writing tasks in the portfolio, but they end up getting much lower grades from the end-of-module tests, which causes confusion. Also their concerns about grades distort their focus and they seem to take the advantage of the portfolio system to increase their final grade at the end (R 17 from Uni. A).

The last two responses imply that writing tasks have a big impact on students' overall grades to pass or fail a module/course. In fact, their responses indicate a much more serious problem with portfolio assessment. What they stated means that portfolio grades fail to reflect students' true performance, and their portfolio grades are much higher that the grades students get in end-of-course tests. On the other hand, one respondent from another school stated something that contradicts two of the responses above. While respondents 21 and 17 criticize the weight of portfolio grades in assessment, respondent 118 wrote:

> The percentage of grades for portfolio is very low and because of that students do not take it seriously (R 118 from Uni. D).

The previous two respondents commented that the huge impact of portfolio tasks on students' pass and fail grades creates some kind of confusion when portfolio grades are compared to the end-of-course exam grades. This is because while students are able to get high grades from portfolio tasks, which are graded after multiple revisions, their final grades remain lower. While these two respondents suggest lowering the weight for portfolios, the comment made by the respondent 118 suggests that the weight of portfolio grades should be higher in order to make students pay more attention to portfolios. In other words, for some teachers problems seem to stem from the perceived excessive weight given to portfolio grades, while in other institutions, in which less weight is given to portfolios, teachers may experience a different problem of students not taking the portfolio seriously. While it is difficult to determine an

optimal grade weight for portfolios that would be appropriate in all contexts, these comments serve as a reminder that portfolio assessment should be carefully planned to avoid or minimize these types of problems.

Although the problems about grading and portfolio assessment in general vary from institution to institution, all responses raising concerns about this issue suggest a common point. They all imply that portfolio assessment should be well planned, and rubrics to grade portfolio tasks should ensure accurate and reliable grading.

Portfolio training

Some concerns were raised about the lack of training on portfolio implementation at schools. Some teachers stated that training is required for not only teachers and students but also for the administrators in programs. A selection of their responses about this issue includes:

> There is a lack of teacher training on how portfolios should be used properly (R 27 from Uni. A).
>
> There is not a clear presentation of portfolio use in orientation of the preparatory program for both teachers and students. (R 30 from Uni. A).
>
> There is a lack of institutional commitment in the proper use of portfolios. Lack of understanding indicates training needs (R 51 from Uni. B).
>
> The efficient use of portfolios depends on the sound and collaborative use of the tool by all team members. The problems may arise from teachers' different approaches to portfolio implementation caused by insufficient knowledge about its use (R59 from Uni. B)
>
> Teachers and coordinators lack background - knowledge and experience - and training in portfolio use (R98 from Uni. C).
>
> Teachers and students need more education and training about what a portfolio is and its benefits (R 107 from Uni. C).

The responses above clearly indicate that there is need for training in portfolio implementation. However, it is important to highlight that teachers emphasized not only teacher training but also a need for training of students and administrators.

Considering the problems related to students' previous educational backgrounds and institutional policies mentioned earlier in this chapter, such suggestions made about training could really help improve portfolio implementation at schools.

Analysis of the suggestions made

Students' attitudes towards portfolios

Analysis of the problems and their sources revealed that students' approaches and attitudes to portfolios are often considered as creating big challenges in portfolio use at schools. Most of the suggestions made regarding this problem imply that students' attitudes towards portfolios should be changed in a more positive way, and students should be trained to take charge of their learning and progress rather than to just focus on their grades. Many respondents stated that informing students about the benefits of portfolios can be a solution:

> I suppose students should be more well-informed in terms of its advantages and shown some good examples (R 95 from Uni. C).
>
> We should try to show students good examples of portfolios and maybe students who keep portfolios regularly and pay attention to them should be praised in a different way rather than with only grades (R 38 from Uni. B).

Others felt that better results could be achieved by including reflection and self-assessment in portfolios:

> Students should be asked to reflect on their portfolios and products, and to prepare tasks to show that they are aware of their learning process, weaknesses, and strengths (R 7 from Uni. A).
>
> We should include self-assessment and peer assessment in our portfolio so that learners can become more aware of their learning process and progress (R 80 from Uni. E)

Some respondents believe that students could have more positive attitudes towards portfolios and would be less likely to copy portfolio tasks from other sources if more personalized, creative and enjoyable tasks were included in portfolios:

> Cheating can be prevented by the originality of tasks. I mean more reflective and personalized tasks can be assigned for the portfolio (R 95 from Uni. C).
>
> The portfolio should be made more appealing for students by incorporating it more in class, with a more user-friendly format, and more colourful and creative tasks (R 28 from Uni. C).
>
> I think for each level different portfolio assignments should be given. For example, at A1 level we should help our students gain the habit of reading. Instead of asking them to read a book and summarize it outside the class, as a class we can have reading sessions in our syllabus. At the end of each session, we can give a short worksheet on that day's reading. This can also prevent copying from each other (R 99 from Uni. C).

Such suggestions imply that student attitude problems may also be related to the problem analyzed under the heading of inappropriate tasks. Unless portfolio tasks are varied and appealing, students might not develop positive attitudes towards portfolios. Similar to appropriateness of tasks, the overall portfolio assessment system is stated as one of the factors preventing students from considering the portfolio as a learning tool rather than as only an assessment tool. Several teachers noted that students see their portfolios as an end product to be assessed, and this was believed to be a result of students' previous educational experiences. However, some responses suggest that this is also caused by the institutional policies or practices regarding portfolio assessment. Some respondents wrote that the portfolio should be openly presented and used as a learning tool:

> I believe that portfolio is a great tool to assess students' performance and see their progress. To improve the use of it, students should be involved in the process and its assessment. It shouldn't be done just for the sake of giving grades (R 59 from Uni. B).
>
> It could be left optional and used for bonus grades because a self-responsible student naturally would choose to keep a portfolio and make use of it. When it is something to be graded, students do not see it as a source of feedback on their learning (R 54 from Uni. A).
>
> My suggestion is that the assessment of portfolio should be kept at minimum because otherwise it is just like an exam (R 89 from Uni. C).

> There should be practices based on research. Portfolios are yet another layer and become burdensome to teachers and students. Portfolios require time to reflect. Testing environments are hectic. If portfolios are to be used properly, testing has to be deemphasized because portfolios promote learning but testing discourages it (R 51 from Uni. B).

The suggestions presented in this section are all interrelated in that they imply that most of the problems experienced with portfolio use affect each other. Although students' lack of good study habits and lack of responsibility for their own learning were stated as the biggest problems, problems with tasks, and the way portfolios are assessed seem to exacerbate students' development of negative attitudes.

Time allocation

Many respondents noted that portfolio checking and grading creates extra workload for them and many feel that their schools should provide them with some extra time for portfolio tasks and paper work. At two of the five schools, only writing course teachers have portfolio implementation in their classes while at the others all teachers are responsible for portfolio tasks or assignments. Regardless of context, time constraints were raised by teachers from all schools and the suggestions made are as follows:

> There should be fewer students in each class so that we can give effective and constructive feedback on portfolios and the tasks (R 26 from Uni. A).
>
> There should be more time allocated for each student in portfolio meetings (R98 from Uni. C).
>
> Teachers should be allowed more space and time in the program for portfolio application and assessment and this can decrease the workload and make portfolio more attached to teaching and learning (R 61 from Uni. A)
>
> Portfolio teachers, writing teachers in our school, should be provided with more free hours to help especially weak students with tasks (R 124 from Uni. D).

The responses clearly imply that teachers need more time because portfolios mean extra workload, even some kind of burden, for teachers. It is also important to

note that none of the teachers suggest that portfolios should be dropped, but they are just pointing out the need for more time to be able to the best job they can do with them.

Well-designed assessment procedures

Another problem that makes teachers struggle with portfolio use was the lack of well-designed rubrics and guidelines for grading portfolios, and frequent changes in portfolio requirements and assessment. These issues seem more related to planning problems at schools than to implementation. Teachers expect institutions to have determined and set into place the procedures to be followed during portfolio implementation before portfolios are actually put into practice. The following responses express teachers' expectations from their institutions:

> Grading rubrics for different tasks at different levels should be prepared in detail beforehand. Without them there is confusion and unfair grading among teachers (R 98 from Uni. C).
>
> The institution needs to make sure from the beginning that portfolio means the same thing to all teachers and students. I know it is not easy to explain what a portfolio is and isn't to our students who have spent 16-17 years at schools without the idea of portfolio. It doesn't even mean the same thing to teachers at the institution. Therefore, if the school does not make it clear for teachers and students, portfolio turns into a pile of papers in the end (R 40 from Uni. B).
>
> Clear instruction and stability are definitely a must. One reason why portfolios are a problem is that the requirements for content and criteria for assessment constantly change and teachers add their own opinions as well. Thus, there is no standardization among teachers and within different levels (R 45 from Uni. B).
>
> There should be training for teachers by giving in-service tutorials on how to use portfolios effectively. Students should also be trained about the purpose and keeping a portfolio properly (R 27 from Uni. A).

It is obvious that for effective portfolio implementation, schools need to plan its use carefully and train teachers and students in portfolio use. If there are changes during the implementation process, it can be expected that confusion and problems might emerge.

Conclusion

In this chapter, overall analyses were presented in five sections: information about the preparatory programs, portfolio content and assessment procedures, aims of portfolio use at schools, teachers' perceptions of portfolio use, and problems experienced with portfolio use, sources of these problems and teachers' suggestions on how portfolios can be more effectively used. The next chapter will discuss the findings, pedagogical implications of the study, the limitations, and ideas for further research.

CHAPTER V- CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study investigated portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools. The procedures followed during implementation, the aims targeted by schools, teachers' perceptions of portfolios and experiences with portfolios in practice were all examined. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How are portfolios implemented at Turkish university preparatory schools?
2. What are the aims of portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of portfolios?
4. What are teachers' experiences with portfolios in practice?
   a. What problems are experienced by teachers in portfolio implementation?
   b. What are the sources of the problems experienced in portfolio implementation?
   c. What suggestions are made by teachers to improve portfolio use?

This chapter will present the findings and discussion, implications of the study, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

Discussion of Findings

Portfolio implementation at university preparatory schools

In response to the first research question, which is "How are portfolios implemented at Turkish university preparatory schools?," the first questionnaire results provided data on preparatory programs, portfolio content and procedures, and portfolio assessment. First, they showed what kind of information students are provided with about portfolio use. They also revealed whether portfolios used at these Turkish

preparatory schools display certain key features often considered integral to portfolios, such as students' participation in selection of content, students' self-assessment and student self-reflection. The results further display what skills portfolios are mostly used for and the materials that are most commonly included in portfolios.

The results about the kind of information students are provided with about portfolios at the beginning of instruction are important because the literature consistently argues that it is crucial that students be informed about aims of portfolio use, portfolio content, assessment criteria and students' roles in portfolio development. Providing students with such an overview of the nature of portfolios is cited as important not only because students need to understand these features if they are to make best use of portfolios, but also because it serves as a kind of feedback for teachers in order to make adjustments to portfolio content and/or assessment criteria if necessary (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; McMillan, 2001). All seven schools reported that they inform their students about portfolio content and five of the seven schools provide information about assessment criteria and aims of portfolio use for their students. Unfortunately, although most schools reported that students are provided with such information about portfolio use, the effectiveness of the way they inform their students could be open to discussion. As presented in the analysis of the teachers' responses under "problems related to students" section, there were many comments stating that students are not aware of the benefits of the portfolio, and thus they do not pay much attention to their portfolios. Schools might need to consider finding new and more effective ways of giving the initial information about portfolios to students so as to help students become aware of the benefits of portfolios, and thus encouraging students to make more effort in their portfolios. Presenting students with the concept of portfolios as a part of the course might not help students much to internalize how

portfolios can contribute to their learning. In addition to informing students about portfolio implementation, the aims of its use and the benefits of portfolios, and showing some good examples of portfolios kept previously can be considered as the first step of involving students in the process. However, student participation or involvement in portfolios requires more efforts, which will be discussed below.

The literature on portfolios emphasizes that student participation in the selection of portfolio content is one of the key features of portfolios because, it is stated, students who are responsible for selection and evaluation of their products gain greater awareness of the quality of their products, and thus monitor their learning more effectively (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; Lynch & Shaw, 2005; Murphy, 1997). The results in this study related to student involvement in portfolios at these preparatory schools indicate that in most cases, portfolios are being implemented in a way that does not necessarily require - or at least does not display - any student participation in the selection of content. The analysis showed that at none of the schools are students allowed to make their own selections among their products of what to include in their portfolios. Three of the seven schools reported that portfolio entries are determined by both teachers/administrators and students; however, it was subsequently revealed that 'student involvement' in those cases is restricted to topic choice rather than choosing actual tasks or deciding on materials to be included in the portfolios. Considering this lack of student participation in the selection of portfolio entries/content, it might be concluded that teachers' critical comments about students' irresponsibility and low motivation for portfolios are not entirely surprising. Murphy (1997) points out that some portfolios are highly standardized, which means all students perform the same tasks at the same level, and portfolios are too narrowly prescribed by teachers. She then criticizes portfolios of that kind, as they neither offer students the opportunity to

exercise judgment about their work nor promote student responsibility for their portfolios. Murphy's explanation might also be valid for understanding the underlying causes of the students' reported lack of responsibility and motivation. Since it is teachers and/or administrators who are deciding on portfolio content in these schools, expecting portfolios to promote student responsibility is questionable.

Another key feature of portfolios to be discussed here is about student self-assessment and reflection, which is generally considered as another crucial way of involving students in portfolio development. Although it is emphasized in much of the literature that student self-assessment and reflection are a critical component of the portfolio (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; Jones and Shelton, 2006; Lynch & Shaw, 2005; Paulson et al., 1991), the findings in this study revealed that the importance of self-assessment and reflection in the portfolio appears to be underestimated by most of these schools. Out of seven schools, portfolios in only two include self-assessment and reflection, and just one school encourages self-assessment by asking students to assess their "can do statements" described for each level of proficiency. On this point the findings reflect a warning that has been made in the literature, that one component of portfolios that is often underestimated or missed by teachers, is the use of reflective papers (Fernsten, 2005).

Yet, another interesting point about reflection is - as mentioned in the previous chapter - that the respondents from universities A and B noted that they had tried to include student reflections in portfolios, but because of the students' negative attitudes towards reflection, they decided not to use them. These responses reveal that students' attitudes towards portfolios, even perhaps more than teachers', might be a barrier for effective implementation of portfolios at Turkish university preparatory schools. Indeed, students' negative attitudes are reported by teachers as one of the big

challenges to portfolio use at schools. As presented in the analysis of the qualitative data in chapter four, the reasons for students' negative feelings about reflection and self-assessment are possibly related to students' previous educational culture, or more specifically the Turkish educational system. As pointed out by Yılmaz (2007), students in Turkey do not usually engage in learning activities that require critical thinking, rather their approach to learning can be characterized by rote learning or memorization. In such instructional methods, students are generally passive learners while teachers are assumed to be responsible for transferring knowledge to students. The role of high-stakes norm-referenced tests - for the selection and placement of students in prestigious high schools and universities - could also be considered to be a significant constraint in the Turkish educational system because to be successful in such tests is naturally the most important aim for students. As a result of having received a primary and secondary education that follows mainly teacher-centered instruction methods and having made efforts only to be successful at norm-referenced tests before coming to university preparatory schools, students are understandably not accustomed to thinking deeply about their learning processes and therefore, might find it difficult to reflect on their own learning and tasks included in portfolios. In addition, it is never an easy task to become reflective about one's learning (Kohonen, 2000), and in that sense asking preparatory school students to be reflective about their learning without their ever having had any training in doing so, might not work as well as expected. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether giving up reflective exercises or papers in portfolios based on students' negative attitudes or lack of any experience with reflection is a good way of approaching this challenge. As suggested by Kohonen (2000), like with any new skill, teaching students how to reflect by starting with simple questions, teacher-guided checklists or questions, (See Appendix H) and asking

students to keep a personal diary of their learning process and roles and responsibilities as language learners, could work better than asking students to reflect on their own.

The findings of the first questionnaire also revealed the skills for which portfolios are mainly used in these Turkish university preparatory schools. At five of the seven schools portfolios are used solely for writing skills and students' writing assignments. This includes primarily process writing drafts on different types of essays and paragraphs. Although portfolios are cited as being appropriate tools to display a variety of skills and abilities in different areas and as being suitable for integrating into all curriculum areas (Hedge, 2008; Johnson and Rose, 1997; Arter et al., 1995), the findings in this study showed that portfolios are still being used mainly for the writing component of Turkish university preparatory programs. In an earlier study conducted at Turkish university preparatory schools (Oğuz, 2003), it was also revealed that a great majority of teachers who reported having some kind of knowledge about portfolios (130 out of 137), nevertheless stated that portfolios are mainly used to assess writing skills.

The possible reasons for this sole focus on writing skills are varied. One possibility is that it is because much of the literature on portfolios addresses their use in writing classrooms (Mullin, 1998). The fact that the literature provides more information about portfolio models/use in writing classrooms is likely to have shaped portfolio use in the Turkish EFL context in this study. Furthermore, Valencia and Calfee (1991) state that a frequently voiced belief is that writing fits easily with the portfolio approach because the products are tangible. This might imply that productive skills, writing and speaking, are more appropriate for documentation. However, as stated by Valencia and Calfee (1991), while the documentation of production and performance is relatively easier for writing skills, the documentation of oral skills

requires expertise and investment for institutions to supply the necessary equipment, such as recorders, or cameras. Receptive skills, reading and listening, on the other hand, are more internal processes, and thus might be more challenging to be documented in portfolios. In that sense, using portfolios only in writing classrooms is probably more practical for most institutions. Another reason why portfolios are heavily used for writing skills in these schools might be that most schools have separate skills courses. In these language programs, students take separate courses, generally as follows: a main course in which they are presented with grammatical structures following a course book; a reading course; a writing course; and a listening and speaking course. Therefore, such a language program would possibly require students to develop a different portfolio with a different teacher for each component of the program, or develop different sections of a portfolio with different teachers. When the determination of portfolio contents and assessment procedures are considered, integration of all curriculum areas into a portfolio might produce certain challenges in terms of deciding the materials and tasks representing each component of the program and the weight of each section in portfolio assessment.

Aims of portfolio use at schools

The second research question of the study is: "What are the aims of portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools?," for which the data were collected in the first questionnaire. The respondents were all teachers who had some kind of administrative duties in their institutions, and thus could be assumed to know well the objectives that portfolio use is expected to realize.

One of the aims reported by the respondents in all seven schools was that *schools aim to assess multiple dimensions of language learning with portfolio implementation. "*Multiple dimensions" in this item is defined as both students'

products as well as their learning processes. It is broadly understood in the literature that the portfolio is not like an end product to be completed in one sitting, in a given limited time, and then assessed. It is assumed that students will revise their portfolio tasks or entries according to their own self- and/or peer assessments and teacher feedback, and that this whole process can be displayed in portfolios. In that sense, portfolios are considered to be appropriate tools to assess multiple dimensions of language learning by evaluating both the quality of their products and the development over time (Brown, 2004; O'Malley and Pierce, 1996; Valencia and Calfee, 1991). When the portfolio entries at these schools, primarily writing tasks, are considered, we see a cycle of drafting writing tasks until the final piece is produced. It could be assumed that the institutions could be accomplishing their aim of assessing multiple dimensions of learning as long as the process which students go through is also taken into consideration while portfolio tasks are graded. For this question, the results to items 14 and 18 on Q2 asking whether the portfolio is an appropriate tool to assess students' learning processes and to assess students' products respectively, could also provide insights for whether the institutions are achieving this aim or not. The analysis of these two items revealed that although the difference is slight, teachers feel more confident in portfolios being appropriate tools for assessing students' products rather than their learning processes. The reason why more teachers find portfolios appropriate for assessing products could be because of the fact that at most institutions portfolios lack self-assessment and reflection features, which could better provide insights into students' learning processes.

Another aim that was reported by all seven schools is: *promoting student responsibility and ownership for their learning.* Students who are responsible for their learning are assumed to monitor their own progress and set goals for meeting their

needs; however, as discussed earlier in this chapter, by just asking students to keep products in portfolios without including student participation in the selection of portfolio content and reflection in portfolios, schools might not be able to achieve this aim. Portfolios that call for reflection on the part of students are cited to have several outcomes: "students take responsibility for knowing where they are with regard to learning goals, they broaden their view of what is being learned and they begin to see learning as a process…" (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 36). Thus, if all of these schools are truly aiming at encouraging students to take responsibility, they need to consider that portfolios are best able to promote students' responsibility and ownership for their learning when student participation in content selection and reflection are included.

Among the aims that are reported by five of the seven schools involved in this study is *enhancing teacher involvement in assessment*. Examining the assessment instruments used at schools (Table 4, p. 45), it can be seen that compared to exams such as quizzes, midterm and final examinations, portfolios can be said to promote teacher participation in assessment. This can also be observed when the teachers' perceptions questionnaire results are examined. The level of agreement with the item asking whether portfolios enhance teacher involvement in assessment has the second highest level of agreement among teachers (73.8 %). Teacher involvement in assessment can be considered an important benefit. First, students might be more attentive and careful in class while producing portfolio tasks as they know that their portfolio grades will be determined by their class teachers. Second, enhancing teacher involvement in assessment could have another positive implication in that teachers might feel more responsible for their students and thus might make more efforts for effectiveness in their instruction.

Similar to the previous item, *promoting student-teacher interaction* was reported as an aim by five of the seven schools. In the literature, externally mandated tests are cited as placing teachers solely in the role of 'technicians' (Valencia & Calfee, 1991), whereas portfolios promote teacher responsibility in instruction and assessment. Since teachers are in charge of introducing the idea of portfolios, as well as the content and aims to the students, and also responsible for helping students develop their portfolios during instruction, it could be stated that portfolio use has the potential to enhance dialogue between the teacher and students. Thus, it is not surprising that the item asking teachers' perceptions of the role of portfolios in promoting student-teacher interaction received the highest level of agreement (76.18%). The findings are similar to the results of an earlier study (Oğuz, 2003) on teachers' perceptions of portfolios in which it was also revealed that a great majority of teachers think that portfolio assessment improved dialogue between them and their students. When the nature of language programs at preparatory schools is considered, the dialogue between teachers and students is extremely important. Preparatory school students, depending on their level of proficiency, usually have 20-25 hours of English classes per week and they have institutional proficiency exams to pass in order to start their departmental studies in the following year. Even though this is a quite intensive study program, students still obviously can benefit from guidance and extra help outside the class from their teachers. If there is a good interaction between students and the teacher, this might encourage students to ask for help with their needs both in and outside the class. If portfolios are believed to be improving student-teacher interaction, then they can be said to be contributing to students' learning.

The least frequently reported aim - *offering opportunities for collaborative work with peers* - although selected by only two schools is, nevertheless, worth

discussing here. As a matter of fact, this result is not surprising considering that at none of the schools are peer-assessment criteria included in portfolios. Lack of peer-assessments in portfolios indicates that portfolio tasks do not require students to work collaboratively, but rather they all include the individual work of students. The reason for including only students' individual work could be based on the fact that students are assessed according to the tasks and entries included in their portfolios, and since portfolio grades have an impact on students' pass and fail grades at the end of courses or terms, it could be thought that portfolios should document every student's performance based on their individual efforts, thus achieving a more accurate assessment.

In this chapter, looking at the schools' most frequently and least frequently selected aims, a general pattern emerges of a kind of mismatch between the way portfolios are used and the objectives aimed to be realized with portfolio use. As mentioned in chapter 2, the literature emphasizes crucial steps to be followed in planning for portfolio implementation. The first two steps are setting the purpose for portfolio implementation and specifying portfolio content. Determining the purpose provides focus and direction for instructional objectives. In the light of the identified purpose and objectives, portfolio tasks and entries that match the objectives need to be determined (McMillan, 2001; Moya and O'Malley, 1994; NCLRC, 2006; O'Malley and Pierce). It is obvious that there needs to be a clear reason why certain tasks and entries should be included in portfolios. In order to establish a match between the aims for the portfolio use and the way it is used, it is necessary to determine the purpose/s for portfolio implementation and to identify appropriate portfolio tasks and requirements that would possibly help the schools achieve the aims targeted with portfolios.

Teachers' perceptions of portfolios

In response to the third research question, which is "What are teachers' perceptions of portfolios?," the results of the Likert-Scale questionnaire will be discussed in this section. The questionnaire results were analysed according to teachers' perceptions of portfolios as a teaching and learning tool and as an assessment tool.

When we look at the teachers' perceptions of portfolios as a learning and teaching tool and as an assessment tool, it can be observed that they feel more positively towards portfolios as an assessment tool than as a teaching and learning tool. Despite the fact that teachers' responses to open-ended questions about their experiences with portfolio use at their schools revealed some serious problems, most of them still believe that portfolios are good assessment instruments. Teachers might be pleased that portfolios allow them to be more involved in assessment and/or feel that portfolio use helps them take more control over their classes. The responses about self-assessment and reflection, student involvement in the process, and grading rubrics indicate that some teachers are really knowledgeable about how portfolios can more effectively be used. Some of these teachers are no doubt aware of the potential benefits of portfolios and therefore, responded positively to the item asking whether portfolio is a good assessment method. Furthermore, teachers' positive feelings towards portfolios as an assessment tool can also be observed in the analysis of items asking whether portfolios are appropriate for assessing students' products, which had 69.8 % agreement. Teachers who disagree with that item might have been more critical towards portfolios because of particular lacking features of portfolios in their institutions, such as self-assessment and reflection or because of the other problems with students' negative attitudes or the lack of well designed guidelines and rubrics

they reported.

As discussed earlier, portfolios are used only for writing skills at most preparatory schools, but when teachers' perceptions about the skills for which teachers think portfolios can be used are examined, the findings are quite dissimilar from those by Oğuz (2003). Less than half of the teachers (42.3%) involved in this study believe that portfolios are appropriate tools to assess only writing skills while a greater number of teachers (64.3 %) thinks that other skills can also be assessed through portfolios. However, it should be noted that the earlier study was conducted at state universities and at the time of the study none of these universities were actually using portfolios. In this study however, a great majority of the participants are from private universities, in which portfolios have been used for at least a couple of years. This could be an important factor that resulted in the different perceptions of the participants in these two studies.

The results concerning teachers' perceptions of portfolios as a teaching tool and learning tool revealed some significant points. Regarding the results for the items asking about portfolios as a teaching and learning tool in the questionnaire, there is some agreement among the teachers for certain benefits of portfolios. For items, such as portfolios' providing a kind of bridge between instruction and assessment, or providing insights into each student's learning process and improvement, the level of agreement is weaker. Teachers' more mixed perceptions could be resulting from the portfolio content, which covers only a particular area of language programs, or from a lack of variety of tasks, as some teachers' remarks quoted in chapter four revealed. Since portfolios in most of the schools include writing tasks, mainly multiple drafts of essays and paragraphs, portfolio contents then reflect only one particular area of the curricula. For this reason, teachers might have thought that portfolios do not fully

represent the curricula, and thus fail to document or display students' language learning processes and improvement. There were also some remarks stating that portfolio tasks are the same for all students, and this indicates that there is a need for personalized tasks in portfolios so as to provide evidence of each student's learning and improvement.

For the three items which ask whether portfolios promote student responsibility for their learning, self-assessment or enhancing critical thinking skills, the level of agreement is around 50%. For these three items, even 50% agreement might be considered surprising because at these schools portfolios generally lack any kind of self-assessment or reflective practices. The teachers who agreed with these items might have thought that the process of students' getting feedback on products and submitting multiple drafts to teachers helps students to take some kind of responsibility for their learning and assess their own performances in each draft. Moreover, they could have thought that revising their products in response to teachers' feedback, and improving their outcomes accordingly make them think about their products and thus contribute to their thinking skills. On the other hand, the teachers who disagreed with these items might have considered the lacking features in portfolios. As cited in the literature, student participation in the portfolio content promotes student responsibility for their learning, and student self-assessment and reflection help students develop their metacognitive skills (McMillan, 2001, O'Malley and Pierce, 1996; Paulson et al., 1991).

To conclude the discussion of teachers' perceptions, the results of this study indicated that the portfolio is perceived as a more appropriate tool for assessment purposes than as a teaching and learning tool. Even though there is some agreement among teachers for the benefits of portfolios as a teaching and learning tool, the

findings suggest that portfolio use at the schools should be developed for the sake of promoting students' learning in addition to being used as an assessment tool. As Wolf and Siu-Runyan (1996) state, portfolios can be constructed for a variety of purposes, but all of these purposes must serve one ultimate aim: to promote student learning. The findings of the study indicate that teachers' perceptions of portfolios vary depending on particular aspects of portfolios; however, it is likely that teachers will develop more positive attitudes towards portfolios if their concerns and suggestions, which will be discussed below, are taken into consideration.

Experiences with portfolio use: problems and their sources

The analyses of open-ended questions asking about the problems with portfolio use experienced by teacher and their possible sources, pointed out some significant challenges in portfolio implementation. A great number of respondents, regardless of their institutions, reported as serious challenges students' negative attitudes towards portfolio use and lack of enthusiasm in using portfolios. It is also stated in the literature that students' attitudes towards new assessment tools, such as portfolios, are often difficult to change in contexts where traditional assessment instruments are heavily used (Klenowski, 2002). As highlighted by a considerable number of the teachers, Turkish students are not used to keeping track of their learning or even thinking about their learning, rather, their main focus is generally on their grades. As discussed earlier in this chapter, students' previous education culture has a huge impact on their beliefs about their roles as a learner and the roles of teachers (Cotterall, 1995; Yılmaz, 2009).

Students' previous education culture was also stated as an important factor causing students to feel uncomfortable with portfolio use in an earlier study conducted with Çukurova University English Language Teaching preparatory students (Köse, 2006). In that study, although some students' first reactions to portfolio use in their

reading classes were reported as not quite positive, it was noted that those students' reactions became increasingly positive as they got used to it. This study did not directly examine students' perceptions, but teachers' responses implied that preparatory school students do not hold very positive attitudes towards portfolios. As mentioned in Köse's study and as teachers' remarks indicate in this study, students' unenthusiastic attitudes to portfolios seem to derive to a certain extent from the Turkish education system.

However, attributing the source of the problem to only students' educational culture should not mean that portfolios do not or cannot work with Turkish preparatory school students at all. The literature suggests that introducing students to portfolios can take some time; however, if students do not understand how the portfolio contributes to their learning and how it can best measure their performance, they tend not to trust portfolios as a learning and assessment tool (NCLRC, 2006). Considering that portfolios are still in the evolving process at most schools, as these schools gain more experience with portfolio implementation, they are likely to find more effective ways of introducing and developing portfolios, and thus help students adopt more positive attitudes towards their use.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the first chapter of this study, the portfolio has been integrated into primary education curriculum, as a tool for performance-based assessment. Although this is a very recent development, it is likely to contribute to students in the Turkish education system getting used to innovative practices in their learning processes, and thus help portfolios be perceived more positively by future university preparatory school students. As stated by Spalding (1995), it is likely that students who are accustomed to keeping portfolios can produce higher quality portfolios that those who are not. She further adds that the development of a "portfolio

culture" takes time. Therefore, in the Turkish educational system, in which teachers have traditionally been considered as knowledge transmitters and students as largely passive receivers of that knowledge, there seems to be a need for a long time to internalize the "portfolio culture".

Another significant problem frequently cited by teachers is students' attempts to copy portfolio tasks from other sources. This problem might be resulting from students' being reluctant to produce portfolio tasks or from a lack of variety and individualized tasks, or both. The same issue was raised in a study by Ekmekçi (2006). Half of the teachers who participated in that study reported plagiarism as one of the problems in students' portfolios at Muğla University. The frequent occurrence of this problem suggests that more efforts need to be made when designing portfolio tasks so as to have students involved in tasks that can be personalized. Indeed, another problem, inappropriate tasks and entries, seems to be a contributing factor in plagiarism because some of the teachers noted that there are sometimes too many or overly similar tasks. Students' boredom with the same kind of task type or having to complete many tasks might also lead students to seek other ways of completing portfolio entries, such as copying from their friends or from other available sources.

One of the most commonly cited challenges for teachers in portfolio use is that checking and scoring portfolios is time-consuming (Johnson et al., 2006, McMillan, 2001, Mullin, 1998). The findings of this study also indicate similar challenges for teachers; namely workload and time constraints. Likewise, in an earlier study on portfolios (Oğuz, 2003), teachers reported that portfolios were not being used in their classrooms because of the heavy teaching load and time constraints. The findings in this study and the earlier study conducted in the Turkish EFL context seem to support the literature indicating that portfolio use requires a considerable amount of time.

The problems mentioned by teachers were also analyzed in terms of institutional policies. It is likely that having relatively limited experience and expertise with portfolios might be creating problems in portfolio use. Particularly teachers' responses from university B revealed that consistency in portfolio implementation across all levels and teachers is an important issue. Lack of a consistent portfolio approach and frequent changes in portfolio content and assessment criteria during implementation will likely result in some kind of chaos or confusion for both teachers and students. Such a problem might have been caused in the case of that particular institution because it did not have adequate time for planning portfolio implementation before the actual use started. Unsurprisingly, when the literature is reviewed, it can be seen that the more time teachers spend on planning and designing, the greater success they can achieve in portfolio use (Brown, 2004, McMillan, 2001, Moya & O'Malley, 1994; O'Malley & Pierce, 1994). Another problem that could be related to the portfolio planning stage is lack of well-designed assessment criteria. In order to achieve reliability across teaching staff and help students know how their work will be evaluated and by what criteria their work will be graded, criteria should be clearly set before the actual portfolio implementation starts (McMillan, 2001; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Some teachers' remarks, however, revealed that there are some problems at these schools caused by lack of clear guidelines or set of criteria for different portfolio tasks. Such problems are likely to produce some confusion among both teachers and students, and thus probably influence teachers' and students' attitudes to the portfolio negatively.

The last frequently noted issue in teachers' responses was the need for portfolio training. Considering the problems and areas to be developed in portfolio use, training is likely to help all of the aforementioned problems to a considerable extent. The

literature usually suggests that most teachers will need some portfolio training as this alternative assessment instrument is generally new to them. It is even stated that many teachers will appear "ill-equipped" and feel unable to handle the challenge of portfolio use (Church, 1990 cited in Valencia & Calfee, 1991). Yet, when the remarks made by and the issues raised by the teachers in this study are considered, it is hard to call most of the teachers in this study "ill-equipped" because their responses frequently included well-informed points, such as the importance of raising students' awareness of portfolios, the need for more appropriate and varied portfolio tasks, student self-assessment and reflection, and better designed scoring rubrics. It is obvious, though that there is a need for well-designed and adequately supported training for all the parties involved in portfolio use, such as administrators, teachers and students. When it is considered that administrators and/or coordinators are generally the ones who decide portfolio design and entries, and also its role in assessment at these schools, training might help administrative parties make better decisions about portfolio use in their programs and find better ways of integrating portfolios into their programs.

Pedagogical Implications of the Study

The analysis of the data revealed important pedagogical implications about portfolio use at Turkish university preparatory schools. Regarding the procedures followed in portfolio implementation, the data revealed that portfolio uses examined in this study lack certain key features of the portfolio, such as student involvement in content selection, self-assessment, and reflection. Although the data also revealed that students do not have very positive attitudes towards self-assessment and reflection, schools should still consider integrating these key features into the portfolio in their programs. Otherwise, the portfolio is not much different from a file or folder where students' works are kept.

As mentioned in the literature, being reflective on one's own learning is difficult. When the preparatory school students' educational backgrounds are considered, students definitely need to receive some training in how to become reflective on their learning processes. This may also suggest that teachers should try to include some reflection practices in their instruction in order to promote students' becoming more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and taking responsibility for their learning. The portfolio has recently been integrated at the national level into the primary education curriculum as well. This should be treated as a chance for Turkish educators to encourage students in the Turkish education system to become reflective and active learners, whose focus is not only on their grades. Thus, the findings of this study should also be considered in portfolio use at primary level. Students should definitely be trained to reflect on their learning processes at early ages; otherwise, expecting students who have not experienced such practices in their previous education to become reflective and self-evaluative through portfolios at higher education level seems to be one of the real challenges to portfolio use.

Another significant point that this study revealed was the importance of careful planning of portfolios before schools actually start to implement them. Without careful planning, as discussed in chapter 4, some problems related to presentation of portfolios to students, portfolio content and scoring criteria seem inevitable. Therefore, for both the schools in which portfolios are currently being used and for those schools that might be considering integrating portfolios into their curricula in the future, serious efforts should be to made determine what exactly their expectations from portfolio use are and how these expectations can be realized.

Schools or teachers need to determine the purpose of portfolio use and answer particular questions, such as "do they want to implement portfolios to document

students' products only or both their products and learning processes?", "what aspects of students' learning processes do they want portfolios to document?", and "what kinds of portfolio tasks and entries can best display students' learning?." It is important to note that like any other forms of alternative assessment, the exact nature of portfolio use and portfolio assessment is unique to a particular setting (McMillan, 2001). Therefore, different teachers and school systems need to consider their own reasons and needs, and how portfolios best fit with other assessment tools and instruction in their system.

It should also be remembered that in order to fully document a student's learning process and progress in language learning, other skills in addition to writing could be included in portfolios. Considering teachers' perceptions of portfolios as a teaching and learning tool and as an assessment tool, portfolio tasks and requirements should be designed in such a way that they should not only be perceived as products by students and teachers but should also be treated as documentation of students' learning processes. As discussed in the previous section, developing portfolios that can serve both as an assessment and learning tool probably needs some commitment and investment from schools.

It was discussed that many teachers stated that portfolios should include personalized and creative tasks rather than requiring the same or similar tasks from all students. On the other hand, they expect portfolios can be assessed in a more standardized way by all teachers. Schools might consider having required tasks that are standard for all students, and optional tasks that are determined by students themselves or their teachers according to each student's needs in order to overcome this conflict.

Since the portfolio requires time for planning, implementing, and scoring, schools might also need to reconsider teachers' teaching hours and other

responsibilities in order to develop more effective portfolio implementation. If teachers are provided with more time allocated for portfolios, they will probably be able to apply some self-assessment and reflection practices, give more detailed feedback to students or design more effective, varied and individualized portfolio tasks.

Today, technology has a big role in young people's lives. It could be considered that integration of technology into language education in preparatory schools can appeal to students, and thus schools might start introducing and integrating e-portfolios into their programs. Using e-portfolios can not only receive more attention from students but it can also make portfolios more practical and accessible compared to paper portfolios.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of the study is that the first questionnaire, aiming to explore how portfolios are used at preparatory schools, might not have fully covered every aspect of portfolio use in each of the seven institutions. Next, the first questionnaire was administered to only one teacher from each school, a respondent selected because s/he had some kind of an administrative duty, and this might have also affected the reliability of the data. Therefore, the results, especially in parts where institutional aims are presented and discussed, should be treated cautiously.

The study also has limitations with regards to the schools examined in the first and second phases of the study. The first questionnaire was administered at seven Turkish preparatory schools, while the second questionnaire could be administered at only five of these seven schools. If data had been collected from the other two schools as well, more varied problems with portfolios and suggestions unique to these schools could have emerged. In addition, considering that there are likely more preparatory

schools where portfolios are being used than are discussed here, the findings of the study might not be generalizable to all Turkish university preparatory schools.

Suggestions for Further research

In this study, teachers' remarks frequently noted students' negative attitudes towards portfolios, but further research can directly examine how students perceive portfolios as an assessment and learning tool. Future studies can further explore students' attitudes towards institutional practices in portfolio use and benefits and challenges of portfolio development. Teachers' and students' perceptions can also be compared in order to see at what points they match or mismatch.

The findings of this study revealed that certain key features of the portfolio such as student participation in the selection of portfolio content, self-assessment and reflection are generally not included in portfolios at Turkish university preparatory schools. Further classroom-based research can explore how these features can be introduced to students and included in portfolios. Longitudinal case studies on the benefits of self-assessment and reflection elements can reveal persuading findings for educators and students. In such research, the relationship between the role of self-reflection in portfolios and self-regulated learning can be explored.

Since the present study used surveys to collect data, more in-depth case studies on institutional practices in portfolios can be conducted, including the perspectives of administrators, teachers and students. Obtaining data through interviews, reflective journals, and observations can bring about more detailed information about different aspects of portfolio use. Conducting longitudinal studies on institutional portfolio practices can reveal valuable findings about the whole process of portfolio implementation: the planning stage, implementation, and feedback on portfolio use. Such a study can present broader and more in-depth information about how portfolios

can best be implemented.

Conclusion

The present study has provided information about institutional practices in portfolio implementation and the aims of portfolio use targeted by Turkish university preparatory schools. The study further examined teachers' perceptions of portfolios and problems experienced with portfolio use, sources of these problems and their suggestions on how portfolio use can be improved. The results showed that there are significant issues that the schools might develop further for more effective portfolio implementation.

Moya and O'Malley (1994) ask whether the portfolio is a passing fad or a promising future. Although it has been many years since they asked this question, the answer to this question might still seem unclear in the Turkish EFL context. The portfolio has been gaining popularity in this particular context at all levels of education; however, for a proper implementation, both strengths and weaknesses must be fully realized and the necessary actions must be taken to achieve the benefits that the portfolio is claimed to provide.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: QUESTIONNAIRE I

Dear colleague,

I am an MA TEFL student at Bilkent University. This questionnaire is a part of my research study, designed to investigate portfolio implementation at Turkish university preparatory schools. The study will contribute to the field of language teaching by presenting institutional approaches to portfolio and aims of its use, and also by examining teachers' perceptions of its use, problems experienced with portfolio use, possible sources of these problems and teachers' suggestions to improve portfolio implementation. This questionnaire will be the first phase of the study. The second phase will be in the form of surveys with teachers. The personal information provided will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Emine Kılıç - kilicemine@yahoo.com

MA TEFL

Bilkent University, Ankara

The questionnaire below is prepared in the light of the literature. In the literature, it is stated that there is not one correct way of portfolio implementation because the aims for its use might vary from teacher to teacher or institution to institution. Therefore, there is not correct or wrong answer.

PART A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Total years of experience in the teaching English as a Foreign Language field: ___ years

2. I work for the preparatory program at_____ University.

3. I have been working for this preparatory school for _____ years.

4. I work in this institution as a (Check all that apply)

☐ Program director ☐ Team/Course coordinator

☐ Testing unit/office member ☐ Curriculum office member

☐ Teacher trainer ☐ Other (please specify):_____

5. Total years of experience in this position: _____ years.

6. Please, check off your source(s) of information about portfolios (Check all that apply):

☐ Books ☐ Colleagues ☐ Journal articles

☐ Research studies ☐ Conference sessions ☐ Workshops

☐ The internet ☐ Other (please specify):_____

PART B: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROGRAM

1. **Our program follows:**
   - ☐ Integrated skills courses
   - ☐ Segregated/ Separate skills courses (Grammar/reading/ writing/ listening/ speaking as separate courses)
   - ☐ Other (please specify) :_____ -

2. **Please provide information about who prepares the assessment instruments used in your program by checking off the appropriate boxes. If the assessment instrument is not used, please leave blank.**

Assessment instruments used in your program	**Testing office made only**	**Teacher made only**	**Both**	**Other (e.g. curriculum unit/ materials development unit, etc.)**
Quizzes				
Midterms/Achievement Tests				
Final exams				
Oral presentations				
Projects				
Portfolios				
Other (please specify): ……..				

PART C: INFORMATION ABOUT PORTFOLIO CONTENT AND PROCEDURES

1. **Portfolios have been used in our program for _____ years.**
2. **All students at all levels in our program are required to keep a portfolio:** Yes ☐ No ☐

   2. a. If NO, please specify the student group(s) required to keep a portfolio:

   _____

3. **Our students are provided with information at the beginning of the academic year/ term /course /module about the following aspect(s) of portfolio use:**

   - ☐ portfolio content (e.g. entries/sections)
   - ☐ assessment criteria for the portfolio
   - ☐ aims of portfolio use and assessment

4. **The portfolio used in our institution includes (Check all that apply):**

   - ☐ entries determined by teachers or administrators
   - ☐ entries determined by students
   - ☐ entries determined by a mixture of both (students and teachers/administrators)
   - ☐ other (please specify): _____

5. In our institution portfolios are used for:

☐ all components of the program

☐ some components of the program (e.g. only writing or/and grammar or/and reading courses.)

Please specify: _____

6. The portfolio used in our program includes students' work on the following language skills.

☐ writing skills
Please specify what is included: _____
_____

☐ speaking skills
Please specify what is included: _____
_____

☐ reading skills
Please specify what is included: _____
_____

☐ listening skills
Please specify what is included: _____
_____

☐ vocabulary
Please specify what is included: _____
_____

☐ grammar
Please specify what is included: _____
_____

☐ other (e.g. quizzes, exams, outside class study materials, lesson notes, etc)
Please specify what is included: _____
_____

7. In addition to students' work on language skills, the portfolio used in our program includes the following entry(ies):

☐ students' self assessment criteria/checklists

☐ peer assessment criteria/checklists

☐ teacher assessment of specific entries/sections

☐ teacher assessment of the portfolio as a whole (e.g. the way portfolio is organized, completeness,)

☐ other (please specify): _____

8. Students are required to include some kind of reflection in their portfolios:

☐ Yes ☐ No

8.a. If YES, please check off the following appropriate item(s)

Students are required to include some kind of reflection on:

☐ the products included in their portfolios

☐ the process of keeping a portfolio

☐ their language learning process

☐ other (please specify): _____

9. Teachers give students feedback on their portfolios: ☐ Yes ☐ No

9.a. If YES, when:

☐ at the end of the year/course/term/module

☐ at intervals throughout the year/course/term/module

☐ other (please specify): _____

9.b. If YES, how:

☐ oral feedback ☐ written feedback

☐ using a standard checklist/criteria ☐ other (please specify): _____

PART D: INFORMATION ABOUT PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT IN YOUR PROGRAM

1. The portfolio in our program is:

☐ assessed at the end of the module/course (approximately every _____ weeks)

☐ assessed at the end of the term (approximately every _____ weeks)

☐ assessed at the end of the year

☐ not assessed (if this is checked, please skip to section E)

2. The portfolio grade in our program is based on:

☐ grading the entries/sections separately

☐ grading the portfolio as a whole (e.g. the way it is organization, completeness, quality)

☐ a mixture of both

3. Approximately what percentage of a student's grade is determined by the portfolio?____%

If the question above is not applicable to your program, please briefly explain below:

_____

_____

PART E: AIMS OF PORTFOLIO USE IN YOUR PROGRAM

I. With portfolio implementation in our program, we aim to: (Please check all that apply)

☐ provide a direct match between instruction and assessment
☐ provide tangible evidence and insights into the learning process and progress of each individual student
☐ promote student involvement in assessment
☐ enhance teacher involvement in assessment
☐ assess multiple dimensions of language learning (student output, process, responses)
☐ promote student-teacher interaction
☐ offer opportunities for collaborative work with peers
☐ promote student responsibility and ownership for their learning
☐ enhance students' critical thinking skills

II. *It is possible that the items above might not reflect (all of) the aims of portfolio use in your program.*

-If you have other/different aims than the ones specified above, please briefly state the aims for portfolio use in your program that are not given on the list above.

-You can also use the space below for any comments and/or information you would like to add.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If you would like to be informed of the results of the study and/or if you are willing to be contacted if further clarification is needed, please write your e-mail address below:

_____@_____

Thank you.

Appendix B: QUESTIONNAIRE II

Dear colleague,

I am an MA TEFL student at Bilkent University. I am conducting research on portfolio use at Turkish university preparatory schools. This questionnaire is the second part of my research study, designed to investigate teachers' perceptions of portfolio use and implementation. The study will contribute to the field by presenting institutional approaches to portfolios and the aims of their use, and also by examining teachers' perceptions of their use. Any personal information provided will be kept completely confidential. Your cooperation would be much appreciated.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Emine Kılıç- kilicemine@yahoo.com

PART A. Please complete the following items as appropriate.

1. Institution: _____

2. Type of degree: BA_____ MA_____ Ph.D. _____

3. Total years of experience as an English teacher

a. Less than 1 year _____

b. 1 to 4 years _____

c. 5 to 8 years _____

d. 9 to 12 years _____

e. 13 or more _____

PART B. Please circle only one number indicating your degree of (dis)agreement with these statements about portfolio use.

Strongly Disagree: 1 Disagree: 2 Neutral: 3 Agree: 4 Strongly Agree: 5

	The portfolio use...	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1	promotes student-teacher interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
2	represents the tasks and activities carried out in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
3	promotes student self-assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
4	is a good assessment method.	1	2	3	4	5
5	enhances teacher involvement in assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
6	can be used to assess different language skills (e.g. writing, reading, speaking, listening).	1	2	3	4	5
7	helps students assess their own performance.	1	2	3	4	5
8	enhances students' critical thinking skills.	1	2	3	4	5
9	provides insights into each student's learning processes	1	2	3	4	5
10	provides a direct match between instruction and assessment.	1	2	3	4	5
11	offers students opportunities for collaborative work with peers.	1	2	3	4	5
12	is an impractical tool to use for assessment purposes.	1	2	3	4	5
13	encourages students to take charge of their own learning.	1	2	3	4	5
14	is an appropriate tool to assess students' learning processes.	1	2	3	4	5
15	is an appropriate tool to assess only writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
16	gives a clear picture of each student's improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
17	promotes student responsibility and ownership of their learning.	1	2	3	4	5
18	is an appropriate tool to assess students' products.	1	2	3	4	5
19	helps students improve higher order thinking skills.	1	2	3	4	5
20	increases the dialogue between teachers and students.	1	2	3	4	5

PART C. This part of the questionnaire aims to collect data about what kinds of problems teachers may experience when using portfolios and what suggestions they have to improve portfolio implementation.
Please answer the following questions considering the portfolio use in your program.

1. Have you experienced any problems with portfolio use in your classes, and if so, what have they been?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What do you think have been the source of any problems you have experienced?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What would be your suggestions to improve portfolio use?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your help.

Appendix C: Sample Self-Assessment Checklist

……. University	**Preparatory Program "Can do" Statements Level: Eng 2**	Document Code: CA

When I complete Eng 2, my level of language will be approximately A2+/early B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

This means:

I have enough basic language to deal with everyday classroom situations.

I can give short descriptions and tell other people information on familiar topics.

You should keep these statements in <u>your portfolio</u>. Refer to them throughout the course as these "can do" statements will allow you to see what you can and cannot do with the language skills. This will also help you evaluate how much you have learned so far and what you need to study more on.

Name:_____ Date: _____

Please mark that is relevant for you using the followings;

√√ I can do this well √ I need more practice of this X I can't do this

STUDY SKILLS	
I have a variety of skills to organize my studies.	
I can organize my study resources and materials effectively.	
I can make a study plan to achieve my goals.	
I can follow my study plan.	
I can improve my language skills independently outside the classroom, using a variety of self-study strategies.	
I can identify the areas I need to study more on.	
I can use a variety of resources for myself study e.g. CALL, grammar book, etc.	
I can review classroom materials for further study outside class.	
I can read about topics that interest me in English outside class. e.g. magazines, novels, newspapers, etc.	
I can use Bilgi Online Education Page, Bilgi Web page and student pages to follow assignments, teacher comments and announcements.	
I can print out the assignment files that my teacher sends using univeristy online	
I can create and save documents and files.	
I can organize files and folders.	
I can use my e-mail adding attachments and creating address lists.	
I can follow my attendance and web messages using student pages	
I can prepare effectively for exams so that I perform well in them.	
I can identify what my weak areas are and use different study strategies to improve them. (eg: writing compositions, making sentences with words in my journal, reading and writing main ideas of texts, etc.)	
I can manage exam time effectively.	
I can understand the marking criteria.	

I can minimize stress before and during exams.	
I can organize and update my portfolio	
I can follow the portfolio guideline and the termly instructor suggestions on the info. sheets	
I can fill out the portfolio learning reflections and keep them in the "Learning Reflections " folder of my portfolio together with my "can do " statements	
I can keep / revise my vocab. journal (i.e. by using new words and collocations in sentences)	
I can revise my vocabulary tasks with the help of my teacher's feedback and use the words correctly in a sentence without translating them into Turkish.	
I can use dictionaries effectively and find the correct meaning of words according to where they are used in a text/ sentence.	
LISTENING	
I can generally understand what my classmates and teachers say to me in the classroom and in tutorials.	
I can understand the main points of a short talk by my teacher or another student when delivered slowly and clearly.	
I can understand the main points of listening texts in my book.	
I can understand the details from listening texts in my book to answer specific questions.	
SPEAKING	
I can make arrangements about my studies.	
I can check classroom instructions and homework.	
I can ask questions when I don't understand.	
I can make arrangements with my teacher about tutorials.	
I can give simple descriptions.	
I can talk about events e.g. describe a personal experience or talk about a (stage 2) graded reader.	
I can give simple information about daily routines and activities to my classmates or teacher.	
I can organize information.	
I can make requests, suggestions, apology and offer something politely.	
I can apologize for delays (i.e. *I'm really sorry that…*, *I'm afraid that…*)	
I can make requests/suggestions or answer them.	
I can have a short classroom discussion.	
I can understand the discussion if the other people speak slowly and clearly.	
I can agree and disagree.	
I can ask for repetition when I don't understand.	
I can give opinions on familiar topics	
I can ask for other people's opinions.	
I can talk about familiar topics with minor pauses	
I can tell an experience, anecdote, etc. using relevant language structures and vocabulary.	
I can give short reasons for my opinion.	
I can give examples to support my ideas.	
I can make a short presentation on a movie.	
I can talk about a movie I like or dislike for 2/3 minutes if I get ready before the talk.	
I can give short reasons for my opinion.	
I can use signposts in a presentation (i.e. to start with, first, finally etc).	
I can speak for a short while, but I need time to think of words or grammar.	
My pronunciation is clear enough for others to understand.	

I can use simple structures easily and correctly.	
READING	
I can find the information I need in short texts.	
I can use headings and pictures to give me a general idea about the subject before I read.	
I can selectively read a variety of texts (advertisements, newspaper articles) in order to predict and find specific information.	
I can carefully read simplified texts (i.e. descriptive, narrative, and informative) and answer comprehension questions	
I can understand the main ideas in familiar texts.	
I can guess the meaning of unknown words in a familiar text.	
I can read and understand the author's opinion.	
I can understand graded readers (A2 pack) and answer questions about the plot, characters and fill in the blanks with target vocabulary items.	
WRITING	
I can write a paragraph about people/places and past events.	
I can write descriptions of various pictures by using appropriate phrases.	
I can write descriptions of events, past activities, and personal experiences.	
I can understand and follow the process of writing a paragraph.	
I can brainstorm and organise my ideas (outlining).	
I can give feedback to my friend's paragraph.	
I can revise and rewrite drafts of my written work by using self-editing strategies.	
I can write an organized paragraph on a factual topic.	
I can give examples.	
I can give short reasons for ideas or opinions.	
I can organise the information in a logical order.	
I can use linkers to connect ideas (i.e. such as, but, also, etc.)	
I can use appropriate language.	
I can use grammatically correct sentences most of the times	
I can spell and punctuate correctly.	
I can use a variety of vocabulary (i.e. on health, fashion, age etc.)	

Areas I need to work on:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: Sample Self-Assessment Checklist

University
English Preparatory Program

A1 Level CAN DO Statements

This section will help you to identify your language abilities and identify where you need more help. Tick √ "I can do this" or "This is my objective"

	At the beginning of the module		At the end of the module		
	I can do this.	This is my objective.	I can do this.	I can do this much better now.	This is my objective.
I can describe my city/town in basic terms.					
I can talk about locations in my city/town in basic terms.					
I can plan and write a short, simple factfile about a city I know.					
I can talk about my daily life.					
I can make basic enquires about a job in English					
I can plan and write a short, simple CV in English					
I can ask questions about daily routines and habits					
I can make and respond to simple suggestions					
I can use visual information, sequencers and pronouns to build a paragraph describing a simple process					
I can talk about film in general and express my own personal tastes in film					
I can talk about my own abilities and interests in the area of leisure and sports					
I can talk about sports, activities and evening entertainments					
I can interpret and transform information in tables and bar graphs into written English					
I can express quantity using numbers, fractions and percentages.					
I can write a basic paragraph about travelling around my city/town.					
I can ask for and give basic information about travelling.					
I can write a basic description of transport in my country, area or city.					
I can talk about my tastes in food and my diet.					
I can write a paragarph about someone's eating and drinking habits and how they spend their free time.					
I can talk about food from different countries.					
I can make and respond to simple requests and offers.					

2008-2009 English Language Portfolio

Appendix E: Writing and Speaking Tasks Checklist

University
English Preparatory Program

DOSSIER: A1

WRITING TASKS:

TASK NO:	DESCRIPTION	DATE	GRADE
1		First Draft: Second Draft:	
2		First Draft: Second Draft:	
3		First Draft: Second Draft:	
4		First Draft: Second Draft:	
5		First Draft: Second Draft:	
6		First Draft: Second Draft:	

SPEAKING TASKS:

TASK NO:	DESCRIPTION	DATE	GRADE
1			
2			
3			

2008-2009 English Language Portfolio

Appendix F: Vocabulary Journal Checklist

University
English Preparatory Program

VOCABULARY JOURNAL CHECKLIST (min 25 words a week)

WEEK	DATE	COMPLETE/INCOMPLETE
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Appendix G: Class Homework Checklist

University
English Preparatory Program

CLASS HOMEWORK

NO	DESCRIPTION	DATE
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		

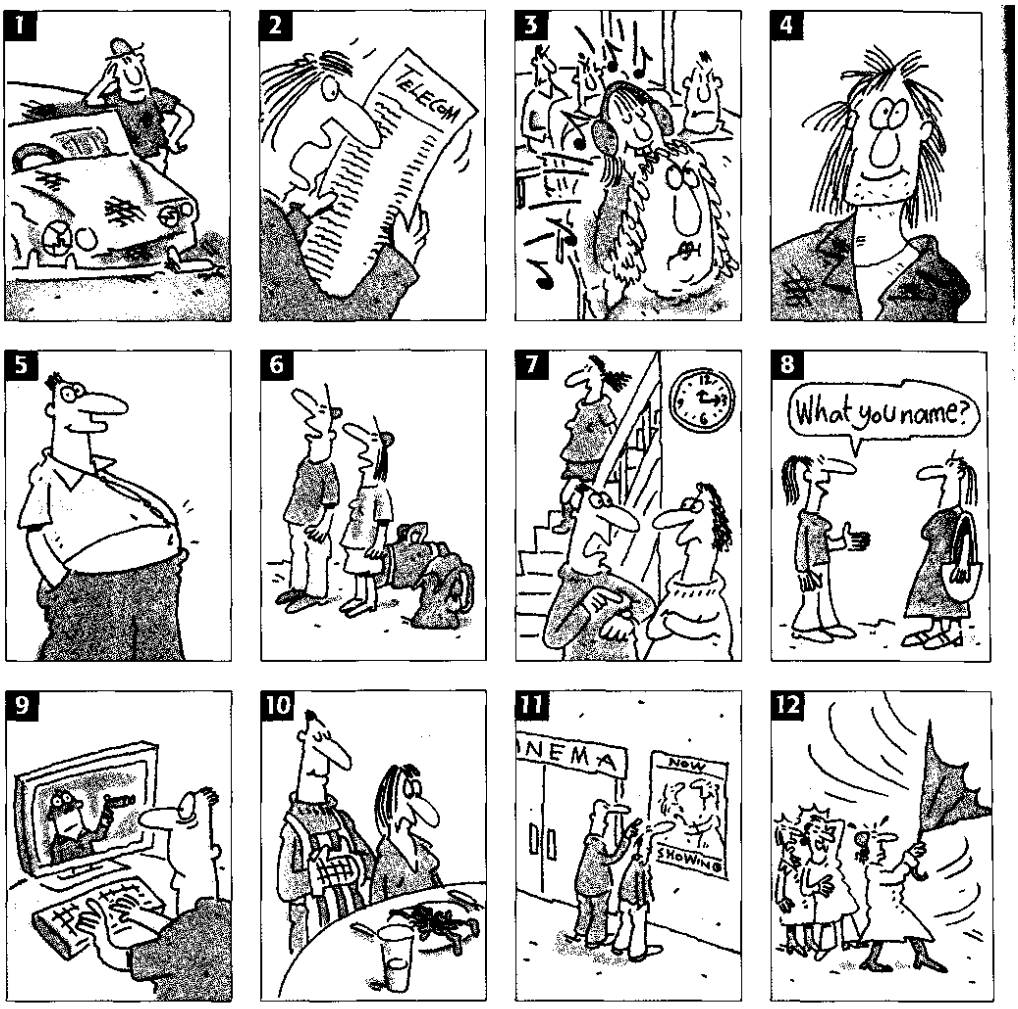
2008-2009 English Language Portfolio

Appendix H: Reflection Activity Based on Weekly Objectives

Name:
Instructor:
Task: Learning Reflection / UNIT 6D

- I can give advice (I can tell people what they should do in a situation)

Look at the pictures and give some advice to these people:



Appendix I: Guided Questions for Reflection on Writing

These can be asked by the practitioner or used by the learner to guide the reflection on their writing. Learner responses can be recorded with the title of the writing and the date and placed in the learner's portfolio.

Title of Writing: _____
Date: _____

Why did you decide to write this?

Why did you choose to put it in your portfolio?

Did you have problems writing this? If so, what were they? How did you solve them?

What did you learn from doing this piece of writing?

What would you like to write next?

www.sk.literacy.ca/.../Questions%20to%20Guide%20Reflection%20on%20Writing.doc

Student's Annotation for Artifacts

Name: _____

Date(s) Completed: _____

Today's Date: _____

1. Please write about the context (unit, lesson) in which you did this work.

_____

_____

2. What did you learn from doing this work?

_____

_____

3. Why did you include this piece?

_____

_____

4. What objective(s) were you working toward when you did this work? Did you meet the objective(s)?

_____

_____

. What learning strategies did you use when you were doing this work? Did they help you?

_____

_____

Student's Final Portfolio Self-Assessment Checklist

Name: _____ Date: _____

Before you ask your teacher to evaluate your portfolio, you should evaluate your portfolio yourself, measuring your work against the objectives and criteria for the portfolio. This worksheet has two parts, a checklist for contents, organization and reflective questions. Add this self-evaluation to your portfolio.

CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION

Place a check mark next to each sentence which is true of your portfolio.

_____ My portfolio has a table of contents with the names of the works in a clear order.
_____ My works are arranged in order according to the table of contents.
_____ All of the work in the portfolio has my name on it.
_____ All of the work in the portfolio is dated.
_____ There is a student annotation form with every artifact.
_____ My portfolio has artifacts and attestations that show progress toward the objectives.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn about yourself as a learner by doing this portfolio?

_____

_____

_____

2. What did you like about creating this portfolio?

_____

_____

_____

3. What did you dislike about creating this portfolio?

_____

_____

4. What main things did you learn about the language you are studying?

5. The next time your class creates portfolios, what would you like to do differently?

6. Did you meet the class objectives for the portfolio?

7. Did you meet your personal objectives for the portfolio?

8. Did the portfolio help you with your learning strategies?

9. Is there anything else which you would like to write about your portfolio?